

Introduction

Fudge Basics is a collection of rules I use for my *Fudge* games and most of them can be found in *Fudge Expanded Edition* by Grey Ghost Press. I wrote this document for my group and my friends, feel free to use it.

Disclaimer

The following materials based on *Fudge*, entitled *Fudge Basics*, were collected, arranged, and made available in 2002 by David Bruns, and are not necessarily endorsed in any way by Steffan O'Sullivan or any publisher of other *Fudge* material. Neither Steffan O'Sullivan nor any other publisher of *Fudge* material is in any way responsible for the content of these materials unless specifically credited. Original *Fudge* materials Copyright © 1992 - 1995 by Steffan O'Sullivan, All Rights Reserved.

About Fudge

Fudge is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of [rec.games.design](http://www.fudgerpg.com). The basic rules of *Fudge* are available on the internet at <http://www.fudgerpg.com> and in book form from Grey Ghost Games, 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 in a 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.

Characters and Traits

Fudge characters are described by "traits," including attributes (any trait that everyone in the game world has), skills (any trait that isn't an attribute and can be improved through practice), gifts (any trait that isn't an attribute or skill but is something positive for the character), and faults (any trait that limits a character's actions or earns him a bad reaction from other people). Supernormal powers are treated as potent gifts.

Fudge uses ordinary words to describe some traits, especially attributes and skills. The following terms of a seven-level sequence are the words suggested by the *Fudge* author:

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

There is an additional level not listed above: *Legendary*, which is beyond *Superb*. GMs may restrict *Legendary* traits to non-player characters.

Fudge Basics

A *Fudge* Rules-Collection
Compiled by David Bruns, August 2002

Character Creation

Fudge provides two basic means of creating characters: the "subjective" and "objective" systems.

In the subjective system, the player and GM work together to describe the character in *Fudge* terms, building from a strong character concept.

In the objective system, a character's traits start at a default level (Fair for attributes; Poor for most skills) and the GM grants each player a number of "free" levels to allocate. She may also grant "free" gifts, or require one or more faults. The player can then spend two free levels to raise an attribute from Fair to Great, for instance; or sacrifice a number of levels to gain a gift, or give his character a fault in return for levels to apply somewhere else.

Trading Values of Traits and Trait Levels

1 attribute level = 3 skill levels
1 gift = 6 skill levels
1 gift = 2 attribute levels
1 gift = 1 fault

Scale - Strength and Mass

Some characters or creatures have certain attributes that are way beyond the human norm. Prime examples include Strength, Mass, and Speed. Such attributes are rated in Scale, which acts as a modifier in interactions between creatures or items of different Scale. In a human-based game, Human Scale is 0. A race of greater-than-human average strength would be Scale +1 Strength or more, while a race of lesser average strength would be Scale -1 Strength or less. Individuals are then of Fair or Good Strength, etc., relative to those of their own Scale. In a "Bunnies" game, where the player characters are rabbits, Rabbit Scale would be 0, while Human Scale would likely be +7. In a "Mecha" game, where the player characters were giant robots, Mecha Scale would be 0, while Human Scale would depend on the actual size difference between the Mechs and humans; a Human Scale of -15 relative to the Mecha Scale of 0 would not be unreasonable.

To calculate appropriate Strength/Mass Scale values, figure that each level of Strength Scale represents an increase of about 1.5 times the Strength and Mass of the previous Scale level. This is because the *Fudge* core rules define each level of Strength (from Terrible to Superb) to be 1.5 times stronger than the previous level. (This progression isn't necessarily true for other attributes. Superb Dexterity is only about twice as good as Fair Dexterity, and each level of Speed is 1.2 times faster than the previous level.) Strength Scale increases at the same rate: a Scale 1, Fair Strength individual is 1.5 times stronger than a Scale 0, Fair Strength individual. Note that Scale 1 Fair Strength is not exactly equal to a Scale 0 Good Strength - Scale really measures Mass, or Density, and affects how easily a creature may be hurt. A Scale 1 Fair Strength fighter has an advantage over a Scale 0 Good Strength fighter, even though their Strengths are equal. The Scale 1 fighter is less affected by the other's damage due to his greater mass.

Action Resolution

For any action the player character wishes to perform, the GM must determine which trait is tested. (This will usually be a skill or an attribute.) If the action is unopposed, the GM determines the difficulty level. Some actions are so easy that the character succeeds automatically; others are impossible (no rolls needed).

Unopposed Actions

When a character performs an action that isn't influenced by anyone else, it is referred to as an unopposed action. Examples include jumping a wide chasm, climbing a cliff, etc.

Difficulty Level: The GM will set a difficulty level when a character tries an unopposed action. Usually the difficulty level will be Fair, but some tasks are easier or harder.

Rolled Degree: This refers to how well a character does at a particular task. If someone is Good at Climbing in general, but the die-roll shows a +1 to the character's skill, then the rolled degree is one level higher than the character's skill level – Great, in this case. Rolled degrees from Superb +1 to Superb +4 are possible; a GM may thus set a difficulty level beyond Superb for nearly impossible actions. Likewise, there are rolled degrees from Terrible –1 down to Terrible –4. The GM should use her imagination in determining the consequences of such abysmal failures.

Opposed Actions

Actions are opposed when other people (or animals, etc.) may have an effect on the outcome of the action. In this case, the player of each contestant rolls some dice, and the results are compared to determine the outcome.

Relative Degree: This refers to how well a character did compared to another participant in an opposed action. The relative degree is expressed as a number of levels. If a PC gets a rolled degree result of Good in a fight, and his NPC foe gets a rolled degree result of Mediocre, the PC beat his foe by two levels – the relative degree is +2 from his perspective, –2 from hers.

Critical Results

If a character gets a rolled degree four or more levels better than the difficulty level, he has gotten a critical success. Likewise, four levels below a difficulty level is a critical failure. This mechanic is also applied to opposed rolls. The exact effects of critical results are up to the GM.

Fudge Dice

Fudge dice are six-sided dice with two sides marked + (+1), two sides marked – (–1), and two sides left blank (+/–0). Rolling four Fudge dice (4dF) gives results from –4 (sub-Terrible) to +4 (trans-Superb). To determine the result of an action, roll the dice; use the result to modify the trait level being tested. For example, a +3 dice result added to a Fair trait is a Superb rolled degree; a –1 result added to a Fair trait indicates a Mediocre result.

Alternative 3d6 Dice Method

Roll 3 six-sided dice. Add the numbers and compare to the following table:

Rolled	3-4	5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16	17-18
Result	–4	–3	–2	–1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4

Odds of Rolling Exactly on 4dF

When setting difficulty levels, it may help to keep the statistical results of rolling four Fudge dice in mind.

Result	Target	Higher
+4	1.2%	1.2%
+3	4.9%	6.2%
+2	12.3%	18.5%
+1	19.8%	38.3%
0	23.5%	61.7%
–1	19.8%	81.5%
–2	12.3%	93.8%
–3	4.9%	98.8%
–4	1.2%	100.0%

Combat

Combat – as presented here – will be dealt with in a quick and loose manner, and therefore only the most important aspects are portrayed.

The basic time unit of combat is a turn, which represents a short period of time (1 to 3 seconds) which allows only a single action per character and turn.

Initiative and Sequence

In most situations, the questions of 'who acts first' and 'in which order do other characters follow' can be settled by comparing all participating characters' relevant traits, such as Speed, Dexterity, Coordination, and the like. Characters with the same level in the respective trait act simultaneously.

Ambushes and Surprise: Obviously the attackers strike in the first turn of combat before the defenders can act. Subsequent turns should be handled according to the development of the situation, leading to 'normal combat' after the first few turns.

Actions

All participants have one action per turn, for example drawing a weapon, attacking, dodging, using a simple object, reloading a firearm, etc. Some actions can be done simultaneously, such as drawing a weapon while moving. Use common sense to determine what can be done in such a short time.

Multiple Actions

When a character performs more than one action per turn, all his rolls are at a cumulative -1 per additional action. So when a character charges an enemy he is at -1 to movement (which is ignored in case no roll is needed) and -1 to attack.

More actions (except simultaneous ones) are only allowed if the attacker has a trait allowing this!

Attacks and Defense

The most important part in combat is attacking and defending. Close and ranged combat will be dealt with separately.

Critical results allow the attacker to bypass armor (totally ignoring armor Damage Factors) or to increase the weapon's

damage (weapon Damage Factor, see *Special Weapon Properties*, below).

Close Combat

Close combat can either be unarmed (brawling, martial arts, etc.) or melee (using real or improvised weapons). In any case, close combat very abstract and one attack represents an exchange of blows or other maneuvers, counting towards both the attacker's and the defender's number of actions.

Unless one participant is unaware of an attack or decides to ignore it, close combat is an opposed action. The 'winner' of the roll inflicts damage (see *Wounds*, below), which can lead to the attacking character being wounded, while the defender stays unharmed. The defender might choose to initiate a counter attack, at which both characters are at -1.

In addition to his Strength, his weapon's Damage Factor and his Scale, the winner's relative degree is used to determine damage.

Ranged Combat

Ranged combat always uses unopposed rolls, depending on the range to the target and other circumstances of the attack (cover, lighting, movement, etc.). Some projectiles (like thrown knives) may be dodged, depending on the situation and the GM's decision.

In addition to his weapon's Damage Factor, the winner's rolled degree is used to determine damage.

Weapon Range: Each weapon has a base range, in which a Fair result is needed to hit the target. With each additional increment of the weapon range, the difficulty of the task is increased by one Level. For small weapons (handguns and submachine guns) the difficulty drops to Mediocre at half base range, and for very small weapons (handguns only), difficulty drops to Poor at a quarter of the weapon's base range.

Semi-automatic Weapons: Semi-automatic weapons (such as pistols, double-action revolvers, etc.) may be fired up to 3 times per turn, imposing a cumulative -1 per additional shot and target.

Automatic Weapons: Automatic weapons can be simulated roughly by allowing more bullets to hit with higher relative degrees. That is, blasting away with a weapon that fires 20 bullets in a combat round and hitting with relative degree +1 means only one or two hit the target. If a relative degree +8 represents maximum amount of ammunition on target (whatever that may be for a given weapon), then hitting with a +4 means about half maximum hit the target, while +2 means only one quarter.

Firearm Accuracy: As an additional feature, certain weapons can be given accuracy modifiers (from -1 to +1) to reflect weapon quality and increased combat range.

Wounds

Combat damage to a character can be described as being at one of the following stages of severity:

- *Undamaged* (no wounds at all)
- *Just a Scratch* (no real game effect)
- *Hurt* (-1 to traits)
- *Very Hurt* (-2 to traits)
- *Incapacitated* (only the most basic actions allowed)
- *Near Death* (unconscious; death without medical help)
- *Dead*

Determining Wound Levels

Fudge offers many ways to track combat damage. The Objective Damage System assumes each character will have an Offensive Damage Factor (the total of modifiers, including any applicable Strength and Scale bonuses, that reflects the deadliness of the weapon used) and a Defensive Damage Factor (the total of modifiers, including Scale and armor, that reflects the character's ability to withstand or avoid damage). To determine how much damage is done in a given combat turn, the following formula may be used:

$$[\text{Winner's Relative/Rolled Degree} + \text{Offensive Damage Factor}] - [\text{Loser's Defensive Damage Factor}]$$

The Wound Track

The following Wound Track is used, allowing multiple injuries at lower levels before threatening a character's life. This Wound Track is truly lethal when high-powered weapons are used or characters with high skill perform attacks.

DF	Wound	Penalty	# of Wounds
1	Scratch		00000
2,3	Hurt	-1	0000
4,5	V.Hurt	-2	000
6	Inc.		00
7+	Nr.Death.		0

Characters can suffer multiple wounds of lower level, as indicated in the last column. If a character receives more than this number of wounds, treat any excess wounds as one level higher. Yes, this can lead to a Near Death result inflicted by a simple Scratch.

Offensive and Defensive Damage Factors

The following list is a simple tool to calculate Damage Factors of various weapons and armor, according to their type and properties.

For Character's Strength

- +3 for Superb Strength
- +2 for Great Strength
- +1 for Good Strength
- +0 for Fair Strength
- 1 for Mediocre Strength
- 2 for Poor Strength
- 3 for Terrible Strength

For Muscle-Powered Weapons

- +0 for no weapon
- +1 for small weapons
- +2 for medium-weight one-handed weapons
- +3 for large one-handed or light two-handed weapons
- +4 for most two-handed weapons
- +1 for sharpness (add to other weapon damage)
- +1 for powered weapon (add to other weapon damage)

For Firearms

- +1 for small caliber, +5m base range
- +2 for medium caliber, +10m base range
- +3 for large caliber, +10m base range
- +4 for magnum caliber, +5m base range
- +1 for handgun or machine pistol, base range 10m
- +2 for submachine gun or carbine, base range 20m
- +3 for rifles (base range 50m) and shotguns (base range 10m)

For Character's Damage Capacity Comparable Attribute

- +3 for Superb Damage Capacity
- +2 for Great Damage Capacity
- +1 for Good Damage Capacity
- +0 for Fair Damage Capacity
- 1 for Mediocre Damage Capacity
- 2 for Poor Damage Capacity
- 3 for Terrible Damage Capacity

For Armor

- +1 for light, pliable armor
- +2 for medium, pliable armor
- +3 for heavy, pliable armor
- +1 for metal armor
- +1 for rigid armor
- +1 for powered (sci-fi) armor

Special Weapon Properties

Blunt Weapons: Blunt weapons reduce the Damage Factor of non-rigid armor by half (round up) and do 50% more damage on a critical hit (calculated from the weapon's Damage Factor only; round up). Shotguns are treated as blunt weapons for purposes of damage calculation.

Cutting Weapons: Cutting weapons gain +1 Damage Factor (they are sharp) and do 50% more damage on a critical hit (calculated from the weapon's Damage Factor only; round up).

Impaling Weapons and Bullets: Impaling weapons gain +1 Damage Factor for sharpness. Impaling weapons and Bullets do double damage on critical hits (calculated from the weapon's Damage Factor only).

Manstopper Ammunition: Manstopper rounds, such as Dum-Dums or Hollow Point bullets; increase the weapon's Damage Factor as well as the defender's armor Damage Factor *if available!* The exact amount of bonus depends on the weapon used. Manstoppers are extremely lethal against unarmored targets.

Armor Penetrators: Armor Penetrators, such as Full Metal Jacket ammunition and Armor Piercing rounds, decrease the weapon's Damage Factor as well as the defender's armor Damage Factor *if available!* The exact amount of reduction depends on the weapon used. Penetrators are less lethal but effective against armored targets.

Weapon Scale: Some weapons, such as whale harpoons and elephant guns, are designed to harm creatures beyond human size. Depending on weapon, they may penetrate or even ignore Scale modifiers of the defender.

Healing

Wounds are healed through a Medical skill. A Scratch is too insignificant to require a roll on a Healing skill (although it might require a kiss to make it better). Scratches are usually erased after a battle, provided the characters have five or ten minutes to attend to them.

A Good result on a Healing skill heals all wounds one level (Hurt to healed, Very Hurt to Hurt, etc.). (Scratches do not count as a level for healing purposes. That is, a Hurt wound that is healed one level is fully healed.) A Great result heals all wounds two levels, and a Superb result heals three levels.

Healing with realistic medical skills takes time: the success of the roll merely insures the wounds will heal, given enough rest. How long this takes depends on the technological level

of the game setting, and is up to the GM. Whether or not strenuous activity before the healing period ends reopens a wound is also left up to the GM...

Otherwise, wounds heal on their own at one wound level per week of rest - or longer, if the GM is being more realistic. That is, after a week of rest, an Incapacitated character becomes Very Hurt, etc. Someone Near Death should take a long time to heal.

Fudge Points and Experience

As a guideline, good roleplaying should be rewarded with one to four FP per gaming session, with an upper suggested limit of five FP for flawless roleplaying. Players may save FP as long as they wish. As a player you can use Fudge Points in different ways, either to modify in-game activities or to increase your character's traits through experience.

In-Game Use of Fudge Points

Spending a Fudge Point may accomplish an Unopposed action automatically and with panache - good for impressing members of the appropriate sex, and possibly avoiding injury in the case of dangerous actions.

- A player may spend one Fudge Point to alter a die roll one level, up or down as desired. The die roll can be either one the player makes, or one the GM makes that directly concerns the player's character.
- A player may spend one Fudge Point to declare that wounds aren't as bad as they first looked. This reduces the intensity of each wound by one level (a Hurt result becomes a Scratch, for example).
- A player may spend two Fudge Points to get an automatic +4 result, without having to roll the dice. This use is also available in Opposed actions.

Experience

Three Fudge Points (3 FP) may be turned into one Experience Point (1 EP). Experience Points are used to raise skills and attributes, to gain new gifts, or to buy-off faults.

Raising a Skill

From	To	Costs
Terrible	Poor	01 EP
Poor	Mediocre	01 EP
Mediocre	Fair	01 EP
Fair	Good	02 EP
Good	Great	04 EP
Great	Superb	08 EP
Superb	Legendary	16 EP
Legendary	Legendary 2 nd	30 EP
	each additional level of Legendary	50 EP

Raising an Attribute

Triple the cost for skills of the same level.

Adding a Gift

6 EP (or more).

Buying-off a Fault

9 EP (or more).