

# COMBAT RULES

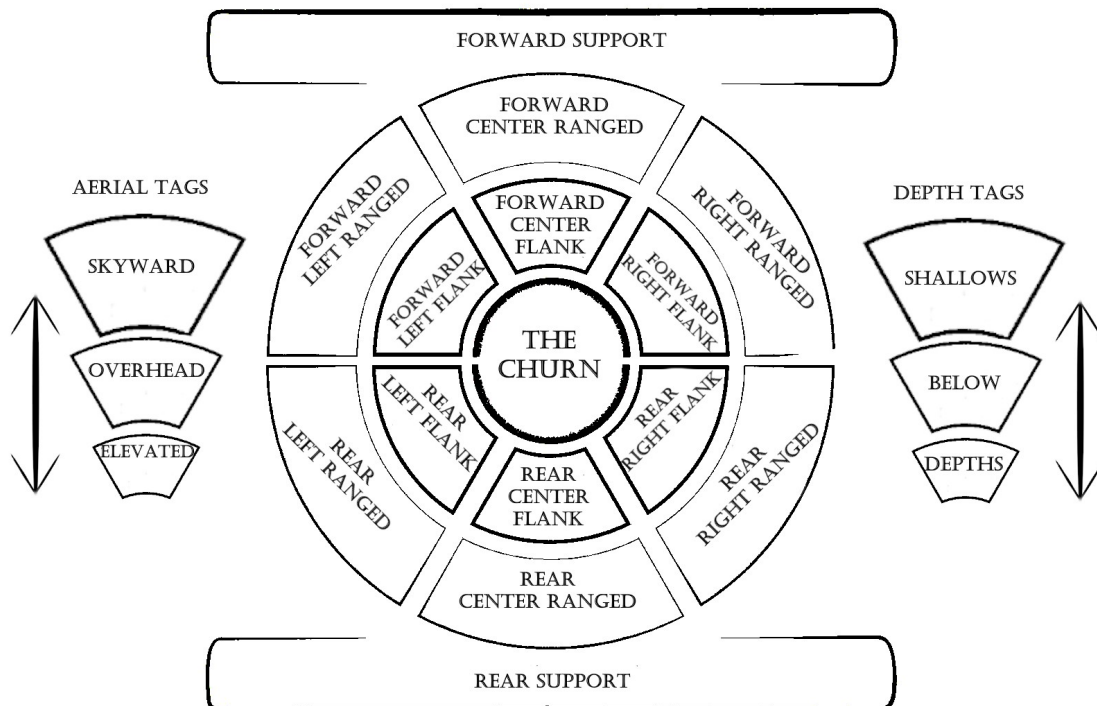
In Labyrinthian, Combat is not the only activity adventure exists to provide, but it is often the most exciting, whether it is as small and intimate as a duel between hateful rivals, or as epic as a clash of armies, with the very fate of the universe in the balance, or indeed, anything in-between.

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## Getting Started

Combat in Labyrinthian is designed to be engaging and dynamic. As you begin, ensure you have become familiar with the **Basics of Labyrinthian** Chapter to cover basic concepts like reading your Character Sheet and how to use Modifiers, and then utilize the following to jump into your first fight:

### Composure

Composure acts like a health bar, reflecting your character's ability to continue fighting. Damage taken reduces Composure. When Composure reaches zero, your character can still move and attack but cannot defend and is vulnerable to Killing Blows.

### The Combat Roll

Combat begins each round with a Combat Roll (CR) using 2d20, determining:

- **Initiative:** The highest dice total sets the action order, with that character acting first. The initiator can pass the initiative to an ally or may lose it to an enemy who successfully reacts.
- **Basic Actions:** Announce the total of the d20 you wish to use for attacks, adding relevant modifiers (e.g., Strength for physical weapons). For Reactions, compare your chosen d20 plus a defensive modifier (e.g., Agility) against your attacker's total. Successful matching or exceeding allows you to react and roll defense dice.
- **Movement:** Your base Movement is dictated by the CR total, adjusted by any movement bonuses.

### Damage and Defense Dice

As you fight, wining and losing will generally come down to the clash between your Damage and your opponent's Defense, the difference between the two determining who will go down. These are both rolled for using dice.

**Damage Dice:** Derived from your weapons or abilities, these are rolled to inflict damage on targets.

**Defense Dice:** Originating from your armor or defensive skills, these dice are rolled to mitigate incoming attacks.

### The Combat Grid

The Grid, divided into strategic positions, is the arena for all combat actions. Characters can freely attack others within the same position. Moving to adjacent positions costs 10 Movement, which comes from your Combat Roll and any bonuses.

### Further Exploration

Gain confidence with these basics then explore the full "Basics of Combat" section for deeper understanding, before advancing to more complex strategies detailed later in this chapter.

## The Basics of Combat

Combat in Labyrinthian can be a bit different than what you may be used to if you have played other roleplaying games, so take care to keep an open mind. In this section you will be learning about the importance of your character's **Composure**, the **Combat Roll**, how to seize the **Initiative** in a fight, how to handle **Clashes**, and finally, how to utilize the **Combat Grid**. With these concepts, you will be prepared to jump into any combat scenario and be an effective combatant.

### Composure

Composure in Labyrinthian functions much like the health bar, or "HP," in other games. It measures a combatant's will and ability to defend themselves, often involving only minor injuries.

Track your character's Composure by deducting the corresponding Damage from their sheet after a **Clash**. When Composure hits zero, your character won't immediately perish but can only perform basic actions like Movement or Attacks.

As a result, they will become defenseless and vulnerable to **Incapacitation** or **Killing Blows**. This vulnerability applies to enemies as well; all fighters must be prepared to deliver lethal force deliberately. The **Wounds and Death** Section will delve into these options and more, though they're not necessary for beginners.

### The Combat Roll

Combat in this game revolves around the Combat Roll (CR), a roll of 2d20 which serves as the cornerstone mechanic. Think of it as rolling a standard 20-sided die (1d20) twice. At the start of every combat scenario, you make this roll, and you'll repeat it each time the Keeper (the game master) announces a new round.

It's advisable to keep the dice visible on the table after rolling so you can refer back to them easily. You won't need to pick them up again until it's time for a re-roll.

When you roll the CR, the first thing it determines is who seizes the **Initiative**, or goes first in the round. After rolling, announce the total. If your total is the highest, you take the first turn. More details on **Initiative** will be covered shortly.

Additionally, the CR determines your character's base **Movement** for the round. **Movement** is essential for navigating the Combat Grid and activating certain abilities. Add your **Movement Bonus** to the announced total to get your total Movement for the round. Using **Movement** will be explained further in the **Combat Grid** section and in subsequent sections on **Momentum and Velocity**.

Finally, each die in the CR provides an individual **Action Rating**. This rating is used for various actions in combat, including Attacking, Defending, using Skills, or triggering Abilities. These actions will be elaborated upon in the **Clashes** section.

## Initiative

Combat takes place over a number of **Rounds** divided into individual **Turns** taken by Players and the Keeper. In order to take a turn, a given character must seize the **Initiative**, and once they do, they may take their Turn. How this is done and how a Round ends so that the process may begin anew, is discussed below.

### Passing the Initiative

At the beginning of a fight, you will have announced the total of your Combat Roll, and whomever had the highest total will seize the Initiative for the Round. Who will take the Initiative after them can either be chosen by that person, or, they may have it stolen from them. Any Ties between Allies can be resolved in whatever way they wish. Between enemies, coin flips are an easy solution.

If the character with the Initiative is not **Reacted** against by an enemy at any point during their Turn, they may pass the Initiative to anyone they choose that may still take a Turn.

If, while attacking, the character with the Initiative is **Reacted** against, meaning their target defended themselves, that target will seize the Initiative, and will then take their Turn.

If multiple enemies should happen to **React** against the Character with the Initiative, they should treat it in the same way as a Tie, and resolve who will go.

Initiative will pass back and forth between all Combatants in this way until all characters have taken a turn.

### Passing Back the Initiative

In moments of uncertainty regarding remaining Turns or when one side has exhausted its actions, a "**Pass-Back**" procedure comes into play.

When it's unclear who can act, the Initiative holder asks aloud, and those able to act announce themselves. If no one can, Initiative automatically transfers to the opposing side, who then select the next Initiative holder.

Pass-Back also occurs if the Initiative holder has no available allies to pass it to. For instance, if you take the Initiative back from your enemies, but your allies have all already taken their Turns, which can be identified when you ask aloud, your enemies automatically regain the Initiative.

Additionally, Pass-Back signals the start of a new Round when both sides have exhausted their Turns, which will be apparent if the Pass-Back occurs, but then has to happen again.

The **Stealth** section will detail further options for initiating combat, and potentially even ending it before it starts.

## Clashes

During your Turn, the most straightforward way to be effective is to Attack your enemies. But, just as you can, they can Defend themselves. The resulting coming of blows is called a **Clash**, and you will find that you have a lot of leeway to express how your character fights in these Clashes. The following will cover what all you can do during your Turn.

## Action Ratings

Upon rolling your Combat Roll, you acquire two Action Ratings (ARs). Think of these as pre-rolled Skill Checks. You can utilize them for Attacking, Defending, employing a Skill, or activating Abilities. Once used, they can't be reused until your next roll.

## Attacking

When you are wanting to simply Attack an enemy, you have a few options depending on what you want to attack with. If you are looking to hit them with a physical weapon like a Sword or your Fists, or fire a Bow and Arrow, you will **Strike**. If you want to use magic, you will **Cast**. Those who control armies or summoned beings will also be able to **Command**, and those who can do...stranger things, can **Channel**.

The principle difference between these items is rooted in the Skills that they are associated with (and Class for Channeling), and what you use to attack. What is common to all of them is the utilization of **Damage Dice**.

## Damage Dice

When initiating an attack with your Weapon, Spell, Unit, or Channel, you'll roll a designated set of dice, ranging from d4 to d12. You will never roll more than 6 of a single die type, but you may find yourself rolling combinations of dice.

After selecting a target, you will select an AR that you wish to use, typically the highest, and include the relevant Talent Modifier for how you want to attack. For instance, if **Striking**, add your **Strength** Talent Modifier to your AR. This step is crucial for your opponent to gauge their ability to Defend.

Then, roll your Damage dice and calculate the total. Announce both the total and the damage type (e.g., Slashing Damage or Fire Damage), which corresponds to what's listed for your Weapon, Spell, Unit, or Channel. This total represents the damage inflicted on the Target, and if they cannot defend themselves, they will take the full amount to their Composure.

## Momentum

Your Damage dice serve a dual purpose. They can generate **Momentum** as they're rolled. Any die rolling its maximum value, or "max", like a 6 on a d6, grants one use of Momentum.

The basic use of Momentum is to inflict additional damage. If any die rolls its max, pick it up, re-roll it, and add the new result to the damage dealt. You can repeat this process for each die rolling its max, including those you have already re-rolled. You can go on doing this forever in the mathematical impossibility that you kept rolling at least one max.

For further applications of Momentum, refer to the Momentum and Velocity sections.

## Defending

Unlike many other games, you will be actively defending yourself; there is little passive defense that you can rely on. As such, you will be able to take action when it isn't your Turn, but only in **Reaction** to defend yourself or your friends. Like Attacking, you have many options depending on how you decide to defend yourself, from **Guarding**, **Warding**, **Commanding**, or **Channeling**, which will all share the ability to grant you **Defense Dice**.

## Reacting

Your best line of defense in Combat is your ability to React to incoming attacks, which will allow you to roll **Defense Dice**, and thus negate some, if not all, of the attacker's Damage.

## Passive Reaction

On your Character Sheet, you should have already determined your Passive Reaction, which defaults to 15, and can be bolstered by your Talents. ( $15 + \text{Agility} + \text{Wisdom} + \text{Intuition}$ , divided by 2)

Your Passive Reaction (PR) is what you should look to first, if you're looking to defend yourself or a friend. If your PR meets or beats the attacker's AR, you can roll your Defense dice for free. If it does not, then you will need to utilize one of your own ARs to React instead.

## Active Reaction

If your PR does not allow you to React, then like when you Attack, you will simply select an AR you have remaining, add the respective Talent Modifier for the kind of Defense you wish to use, and compare. If you meet or beat the attacker's AR, you can go on to roll your Defense Dice. For example, Warding would use your AR + Wisdom.

## Defending Others

Regardless of whether you're using Passive or Active Reaction, you may use these to defend a friend under an attack; or an enemy, if you're so inclined. When doing so, the same rules for determining if you can roll Defense Dice apply.

When you do this, you will be eligible to utilize your Movement. First to ensure you are in place to Defend, but also to displace yourself after doing so. In more advanced combat, you can even use your Movement to bolster the Defense you put out. (See **Momentum and Velocity**)

## Defense Dice

Similar to Damage Dice, Defense Dice come from various sources such as Armor, Shields, Wards, Units, or Channeling abilities. When Reacting, roll your Defense Dice and subtract the total from the attacker's Damage before applying any difference to yourself.

Defense Dice also generate Momentum, which can be used similarly to Momentum from Attack rolls. Simply re-roll any max you receive to gain extra Defense.

In advanced combat, you can Parry with weapons or Ward with offensive Spells. Parrying uses your Weapon's Damage Dice as Defense Dice, while Warding often requires conjuring a powerful spell, such as building up a Tsunami, before you can convert it into a Ward; some offensive magic may however let you Ward immediately. These details will be covered in more depth in the Magic chapter.

## **Clashes of Might and Magic**

Unlike a lot of fantasy you may be familiar with, magic is not all powerful, despite how much destruction it can unleash. To this end, when a Clash between someone utilizing Magic and someone utilizing physical Weaponry occurs, they can mutually defend against each other's attacks.

A swordsman might be able to swat away a fireball in the same way a mage might stop an arrow mid-flight.

So do not be afraid to get in close, no matter how you fight. Even a lowly peasant with a stick, as dim a choice as it may be to try and swat away a lightning bolt, can certainly try.

## **Interpreting Clashes**

In Labyrinthian, part of the joy of roleplaying extends into Combat, where you can express yourself through your character's actions. Whether attacking or defending, you and your opponent can collaborate on how the Clash unfolds.

While the game offers various options, you're not confined to them, and have free reign to describe how your character attacks, defends, fails, and succeeds.

The only guideline is to let the Damage dealt guide your Clash description. The closer you are to zero, indicating a Total Negation, the more skillfully the Defender defended and the less effective the Attacker's assault, and vice versa.

If your damage or defense significantly outperforms that of your opponents, describing it as swatting a fly is appropriate. This description applies regardless of whether the Damage or Defense is dominant.

Even if the Defender doesn't get to React, they should still contribute to describing their response to the attack. Players and Keepers are encouraged to collaborate, especially as they become more familiar and confident with the combat system. Such collaborations can lead to imaginative and enjoyable experiences, even in seemingly mundane combat scenarios.

## **Skill Actions**

In Labyrinthian, your options during your Turn extend beyond Attacking and Defending. As combat complexity increases, leveraging your Skills becomes crucial for gaining an advantage.

All 32 Skills can be utilized creatively in combat scenarios. When opting for a Skill Action, announce your intention and describe how you'll use the chosen Skill. Once committed, choose your Action Rating (AR) after the Keeper announces your target number.

The target number varies based on your chosen action and will be determined by the Keeper when you declare your intent. They may also impose additional requirements, such as consuming your other Action.

Skill Actions involve Improvising, and your degree of success is based on how close you come to the target number. Coming within 5 results in success with some complications, either to your attempt or your adventure. Meeting or exceeding the target number ensures success without issue.

If your total falls short of coming within 5, you will still succeed, but expect severe complications. You won't know what will happen until it does, so stay vigilant and prepared for anything.

## **Making Use of Skills**

You have a plethora of Skills at your disposal, offering endless possibilities for improvisation.

When improvising, adhere to the principle of "Yes, And." While you won't be denied reasonably fun or cool ideas, avoid attempting illogical or game-breaking actions that stray too far from your group's agreed-upon style.

Your improvisations should align with the Skill you're using. For example, Construction can't summon zombie bunnies dealing 5000 Damage, but it can be used to set up barricades, repair vehicles, or rig traps to surprise enemies.

For the more outlandish, you could also use Construction to rig a trap to a door, and bum rush your enemies with the door, ensuring they fall prey to the trap in a ridiculous fit of awesome.

Alternatively, you can use Construction more intellectually; analyze a structure and find a way to bring it down swiftly, and you can guarantee not only you, or your friends, can bring it down in one go, but you'll also have a substantial effect on the battlefield.

Another useful way to employ Skill in Combat is through Linguistics, especially for parties venturing to distant lands. Linguistics Checks can be employed to eavesdrop on enemies or establish friendly communication to resolve misunderstandings peacefully. Alternatively, if diplomacy fails, you can always just kill them all, assuming they truly are just bandits.

## **Abilities**

During your Turn, you can also use Abilities, which may stem from your Class or Skills. Most Abilities can be used independently as an Action, while others require a Reaction beforehand.

Action Abilities often incorporate a **Threshold** system for their effects. This means you must roll a specific number on a d20, using one of your Action Ratings in Combat, to trigger the Ability's effects fully or partially.

When announcing such an Ability, specify its effects based on your Action Rating.

Reaction Abilities typically don't use Thresholds but may have similar mechanics. For example, the Barbarian's Slam Ability allows them to Grapple and Toss their target instantaneously, utilizing either their Momentum or Reaction.

If you're a Barbarian using Slam and react to grab your attacker, your Toss benefits from your Action Rating, increasing its range and potential damage upon impact.

Each Reaction Ability explains how your Action Rating affects its effects.

## **Other Actions**

During your Turn, some actions require no Action Rating or special cost.

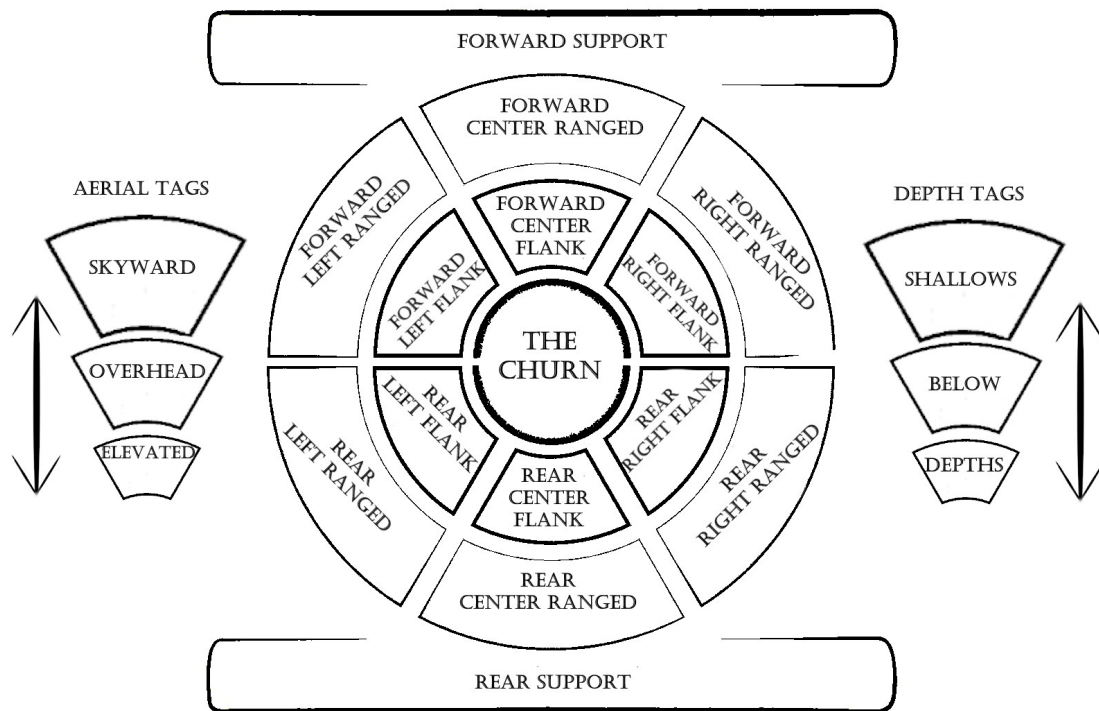
Talking is one such action. Each round lasts approximately 1 minute, allowing for conversation. While there's no need to limit what you say, in-depth discussions are impractical during combat. However, out of character, there is no limit to discussing plans with fellow players or seeking clarification from the Keeper.



Interacting with objects is also free if you're not attempting anything specific with them. You can pick up and pocket a rock without using a Skill Action. However, actions like Throwing require a Skill Action. Likewise, if you have something Consumable, like a Potion, you will need to spend an Action to utilize it.

Once per Round, you can retrieve an item from yours or a willing player's inventory, such as a Potion or more Arrows. Similarly, stowing an item you've picked up is free once per round.

Drawing or stowing weapons stored on your body via a Scabbard or similar means, or retrieving Components from a Pouch as a Mage, doesn't consume an Action. Basic versions of these methods will automatically be available for weapons and as part of a garment respectively, but specialized versions can be crafted.



## The Combat Grid

In Labyrinthian, Combat takes place on a novel kind of grid system that, if you're familiar with other kinds of Combat Systems, can be thought of as a compact hybrid of Position-based and Zone-based maps.

The Combat Grid, or simply “The Grid”, is comprised of 15 individual sections named “Positions”. Each of these Positions are generally arbitrary in terms of how much physical space they represent. It could be as small as a few feet in a room, or as large as entire fields.

Whats important is what is within these Positions, whether they are combatants, objects, buildings, creatures, or any other such thing, and what they are relative to the same things in other Positions. Each kind of these Areas are discussed below.

### The Churn

At the center of the Grid, the Churn represents the Position in combat where either side of the battle are most likely to converge. While fighting can and will readily take place elsewhere on the Grid, the Churn is so named because combatants will find it best to push their enemies there, and attack from them the Flanks. But, they should be wary, for some are at their most dangerous in the Churn...

### The Flanks

Surrounding the Churn are the Flanks, which are Positions immediately outside of where fighting is most likely to occur. The Flanks are most useful for Flanking into the Churn (see **Combat Grid: Advanced Uses**).

### Ranged

Surrounding the Flanks are the Ranged Positions, which are not only useful Positions to occupy when you wish to attack from a distance, but can be used to Flank those in the Flanks for the same benefits as Flanking into the Churn.

## Support

At either end of the Grid, lies the Support Positions. These Positions are at the farthest reaches of the battlefield, only a short step away from fleeing entirely. Unlike the others, which may have multiple avenues to cross into, the Support Positions can only be entered from the Center Ranged Positions.

## Aerial and Depths

Combat does not only ever take place on flat fields or square rooms. On occasion you may find yourself in a situation with multiple levels going up or down, and on others, you might find yourself fighting in the sky itself, or deep below the ocean. The Aerial and Depth Elevations will allow you to mark your elevation in the fight, in whatever way that you're able to change it, be it flying, swimming, climbing, or simply walking up and down stairs.

Each Aerial and Depth Elevation is considered to be in addition to any of the regular Positions you were already occupying. For example, you could be Skyward in the Churn, or in the Depths, but either way, you are still in the Churn.

## Movement on the Grid

When one occupies any given Position on the Grid, their Movement is considered arbitrary. This means, you do not need to spend any Movement to shift yourself within that Position to attack or interact with other things within the Position, including when you React to Defend another combatant. As such, if a given Position has multiple things within it, such as different types of barriers or machines to interact with, you can move between them at no cost during your Turn or Reaction.

## Shifting Positions

When you wish to shift from one Position to another, however, you will be required to spend 10 Movement per Area you cross, and can only cross into directly adjacent Positions. Likewise, shifting Elevations from Aerial down to the Grid and into the Depths, you will also spend 10 Movement per Elevation you cross, including an additional 10 Movement if also shifting actual Positions at the same time.

## Different Kinds of Movement

Running and Walking are not the only things your character may be able to do to move about in combat. You will also have open to you the option to **Climb** and to **Swim**. Some characters, whether by natural capability or magic, may also be able to **Fly**. These different options are covered in detail under **Momentum and Velocity**.

## Difficult Terrain and Turbulence

Some Positions may feature **Difficult Terrain** or **Turbulent Terrain**, which can arise from various factors, including weather conditions. These hazards act similarly, doubling all Movement costs. In severe cases, attempting to move into another Position may trigger a Composure Saving Throw against a set difficulty, such as "+65 Turbulence."

In these cases, roll 1d20 and add your Current Composure. If you beat or match, you may move without adverse effects, but will still suffer double Movement costs.

If you fail, you will not leave the Position, wasting Movement, and will be knocked **Prone**. Being Prone will give you -15 to any Reaction you attempt, but also -30 to any Attack you receive at range.

While not usually dangerous, costing only 5 Movement to recover from, in flight, it can lead to falling

out of the sky, and you'll have to recover somehow, or suffer a large amount of potential damage.

## **Momentum and Velocity**

In combat, the pacing and speed of the fight are vital to understand and wield to your advantage. Through the following advanced combat rules, you will be able to leverage your capabilities to win against more advanced and complex enemies, that can't be beaten by mere might or magic alone.

### **Momentum**

Momentum is a key combat mechanic that allows combatants not just to escalate their own Damage and Defense, but also to leverage their Momentum to inflict devastating Wounds on their enemies, enter into defensive Stances, or break the Stances of their enemies, all of which are crucial for winning against the most powerful foes you'll face.

### **Generating Momentum**

Momentum is a form of “exploding dice”. Whenever you roll Damage or Defense Dice, you should look to see if any of the dice rolled their maximum value, or “max”. Example: 10 on a d10.

Every max you receive will grant you one use of Momentum.

### **Momentum Limits**

For those who fight with physical weaponry, their bare hands and body, or with Touch-based magic, there are no limits to the Momentum you can generate or utilize.

For those who wish to fight at range, however, such as with Bows and Arrows, Throwing Weapons, or with most other kinds of offensive Magic, you will have a Momentum Limit as indicated by these options.

At a limit of 0, you will not be able to use Momentum except for inflicting Wounds; at 1+, you may use Momentum for any purpose up to that many times.

### **The Momentum Gradient**

Due to how Momentum is generated, a gradient across the die sizes emerges. Lower die sizes, like the d4, will favor Momentum generation and inflicting Wounds, while higher die sizes, like the d12, will be at their best for establishing and breaking strong Stances and raw damage. Those in the middle, or options that mix die sizes, will offer more versatility.

Which you will prefer to use will depend on how you like to fight. There are no wrong answers, only what you prefer.

### **Utilizing Momentum**

When you have rolled the dice and have some number of Momentum to use, there are six basic moves available to all kinds of characters, which are listed below. Some, depending on their Class, may have access to new uses; those Classes will detail how those moves work.

### **Extra Damage/Defense**

Simply pick up the max, re-roll it and add it to your Damage or Defense Total. You can often think of these as being follow up hits with your weapons or spells, escalating defensive maneuvers, or even just more raw, forceful effort.

### **Inflicting a Wound**

Pick a max, and call out that you've inflicted the Wound corresponding to your attacks damage type. The Wound will begin as a d4, and escalate with each subsequent application up to d12.

Some enemies may not go down so easily with raw damage alone, and so will need to be Wounded to overwhelm their ability to recover. The **Wounds** section will cover Wounds in more detail.

### **Enter a Stance**

To enter a Stance, you will need to have rolled at least one max. Take every unused max you have, and reserve them and their results; upon doing so you will be unable to utilize your Movement again until you either React or take a new Turn, so time these wisely.

You may use your reserved dice whenever you Defend yourself against attacks as bonus Defense dice. Depending on your Class, you may have specific Stances you can take that will grant you more options, such as using them for offense or powering other effects, but these will require specific Equipment and some number of max dice before you can establish them.

The **Velocity** section will cover Stances in detail.

### **Break a Stance**

Against powerful Stances, force may not be enough to break them. Instead, you can make targeted attacks to break them directly. Each use of this will not deal damage, but if done enough times in a single Round, or against especially powerful foes in a single Turn, the Stance will break.

How many times will be required and in what time frame will depend on the Stance in question. A **Tactics** Skill Action is a good way to try and determine this.

### **Hold Fast**

If you feel there are no good options, or if you simply want to prepare yourself, you can instead reserve any Max you receive until the next Round, and roll them alongside your Combat Roll to increase your Action Ratings and Movement. However, note that if you are attacked, you will lose a max you have withheld for Hold Fast with each attack you take, regardless of whether you defend against it.

## Velocity

Even early in your adventures, you will find yourself generating quite a lot of Movement; much more than you may need to simply move about. As such, you have the capability to leverage Movement as a force multiplier in combat.

The following section will cover and detail **Stances**, **Velocity**, and **Verticality**.

## Stances

Stances are a method of using Movement by choosing not to move at all. While they may limit your mobility during combat, Stances significantly boost your Defense and, with the use of special Stances that your Class may provide, your Offense as well.

### General Rules for Stances

To adopt a Stance, you must use Momentum. For a basic Stance, you need at least one max die to have been rolled as part of either your Attack or Defense. For more advanced Stances, you will likely require specific Equipment, such as a Shield or a specific Weapon Type, as well as multiple max dice.

Once in a Stance, movement is restricted until you React or you begin a new Turn begins. The activation of a Stance grants immediate benefits, allowing to you use the max dice as bonus Defense dice. There is no limit to how many of these dice you can accumulate from your Attacks and Defense, and they will persist from Round to Round. If you wish, you can opt to discontinue your Stance at any time, but this will cost all of the dice you've lost.

More advanced Stances will allow more uses, such as using them for Offense (counter attacks, ripostes, and similar), or for powering specific effects, like the **Shield Wall** Stance available to Barbarians, allowing them to combine their Stance with other Shield users, pooling their max dice together to defend each other.

### Breaking Stances

All Stances can be broken in one of two ways. The first is through overwhelming force; if you deal enough damage to the target, and they opt to use their Stance to boost their defense, they will eventually run out and all effects of the Stance will end as a result.

The alternative, particularly against enemy combatants or monsters that boast extremely powerful Stances, is to attack the Stance directly to break them. This is done through Momentum, and each such Stance (including the ones you gain via your Class) will have a specific number of times such attacks must be made within a Round (or and sometimes even within a Turn) before they'll break. While these attacks won't deal any extra damage, they are a much faster method for breaking the Stance itself.

For some Stances, a third option exists as well to break them, but these are very specific. For example, the **Shield Wall** Stance mentioned previously can be broken if any of the combatant's participating in the Wall are knocked Prone by any method.

## **Using Velocity**

When simply moving is not enough, your Movement can instead be leveraged to empower yourself with speed.

## **Charging**

The most straightforward means to convert Movement into something more useful is to Charge your enemies as you attack them or defend your allies against them.

You can use up to 10 Movement to boost your Damage by that amount if attacking within the same Position. Crossing into a new Position allows you to use an extra 10 Movement per Position, enhancing your Damage accordingly, but will still cost the additional Movement to go to those Positions.

## **Jump Attacks**

While generally unwise, jumping as you attack can give you marked advantage in a fight, but it can also carry a steep cost if it backfires.

Spend 10 Movement to jump as you attack your target; if unchallenged by your target, you gain a free use of Momentum. If they React, you'll be knocked Prone, and will not gain the free use of Momentum, though your attack still counts.

## **Vertical Assaults**

For the even more daring, a vertical assault can be a potent technique, but even more risky. To make a Vertical Assault, you must be at least one Elevation higher than your target, and have at least 10 Movement remaining. Every Elevation you cross, you will spend 10 Movement, and gain 1d10 to roll as extra damage on your target.

If your target Reacts, the extra damage you roll will be split between you and them.

The situation you are in must support a clear path in the air between you and your target. If you are attempting the assault into the water, you will only be able to use it against targets in the Shallows; any deeper and the assault will be wasted.

## **Velocity and Magic**

Not all mages prefer to sit in a corner, saying funny words until a fireball erupts from their staff. Some prefer to get in close, and others can be just as daring as any Barbarian.

When utilizing Magic, you are eligible to make use of Velocity to empower your spells and wards, but note that they will only work for spells you are able to immediately cast in the same turn; spells you are still trying to conjure will not benefit from any use of Velocity.

## **Verticality**

As noted when you learned about the Combat Grid, running and walking are not your only options for Movement, and in combat leveraging the verticality of places you fight in can be just as potent as being fast.

## **Lobbing Fire**

While typically most useful in Warfare, archers and mages alike will find the use of Lobbing Fire valuable in situations that call for it, where Obstacles like barriers, buildings, or even an Army occludes their line of sight to a target.

To lob a spell or arrow at such targets, the Skyward Elevation must be accessible, and your character must know that there is a target located behind whatever Obstacle may be obscuring the target.

When attacking such targets, you will take -5 to your Action Rating for every Obstacle you attempt to fire over.

## **Climbing**

Climbing in combat is challenging without tools like ladders, often necessary to gain a tactical advantage or survival. Combatants must use an Athletics Skill Action (1d20+Agility) to climb, beating a difficulty score of 15 to ascend one position. Failure results in falling prone.

If unable to reach a flat surface after one Elevation change, they must exert extra effort to maintain their position. Opting to maintain your position and continue climbing on the next turn incurs no cost, but performing any other actions costs 1 Composure point each to remain stable.

Falling as a result of reaching Zero Composure due to this will cause the Fracture Wound if falling from Overhead or lower. If falling from the Skyward Elevation, you may die immediately on impact with any solid surface or creature.

## **Swimming**

Combatants begin swimming by entering water or similar liquid. Melee attacks and spell-casting remain effective, but projectile and thrown weapons suffer both a 15-point damage reduction and a range decrease of 1 per each Elevation crossed before leaving the water. Drowning concerns are minimal in combat unless previously imminent.

## **Flight**

Flight in Labyrinthian is split between Natural Flight and Unnatural Flight. The former requires some form of Wings in order to engage in, and requires constant use of Movement, while the latter is typically magical in nature, but allows you to hover in place.

### **Natural Flight**

Natural flyers must spend all Movement they generate each round to stay aloft, and will immediately begin to fall if hit by any kind of Movement Drain or Penalty, like Turbulence. Ascending or descending costs 10 Movement per Elevation. They may also spend a point of Composure to begin a Dive, granting them their Agility Modifier as extra Movement.

Flyers must maintain a Minimum Flight Speed (MFS), as dictated by their Natural Flight ability, which is modified by the Flyer's size and Conditioning skill.



If disrupted, they must roll a Conditioning Skill Action against MFS+10 to stabilize and resume flight without extra cost, or spend 1 Composure if within 5 of the that number to resume flying.

### **Unnatural Flight**

This mode is independent of combat rolls, dictated by its source like a spell or potion, specifying the Movement rate per round. These kinds of effects allow the Unnatural Flyer to hover in place, and they do not need to utilize their full Movement each round, but they still are subject to falling damage if they do not land before the effect is ended.

Unnatural Flight can be very useful, but it is very slow, and can put one at a disadvantage if a quick retreat is needed.

### **Falling**

Under any circumstance where a character begins to fall, upon impacting the surface or any solid object, including other creatures, they will take 1d10 Fall damage for every Elevation they fall through, with the damage being multiplied by 10 if they fell from the Skyward Elevation. If the character should impact a creature up to 1 size larger than them, they will split the damage between that creature and themselves.

## Wounds and Death

Combat in Labyrinthian is both dynamic and dramatic, emphasizing that every wound must be deliberate and every kill decisive. This section outlines the mechanics of Damage, Wounds, and the consequences of near-death situations.

### Damage

Damage in Labyrinthian is never generic, and one should keep the following in mind as they fight:

- Always specify the Damage Type when dealing damage. This helps players with passive defenses adapt their strategies accordingly and accurately reflect how well they're faring.
- Item Cards and/or Character Sheets should clearly list both the damage type and its associated Wound for each weapon or magical element that you wish to utilize.

### Wounds

Wounds represent significant physical injuries, akin to status effects in other games:

- **Application:** Wounds are inflicted primarily through the strategic use of **Momentum**. A combatant may expend one Momentum to inflict a Wound associated with their attack's damage type. The Wound die for each Wound begins as a d4, and will escalate by one size with each application, up to a max of d12.
- **Automatic Infliction:** When a combatant's Composure drops to zero, any subsequent damage automatically results in the corresponding Wound.

While you won't always take a Wound, they are not something to ignore when they happen, nor something you should neglect to inflict upon your greatest enemies. Not all foes need to be Wounded first to be defeated, but not all enemies will go down by brute force alone.

### Managing Wounds

Each Wound has associated with it a "Wound Effect", which describes the effect it deals every Round. These effects are to be tracked by both the Wounded and the Attacker; no one should be tracking these Wounds by themselves. Any penalty taken should be rolled by the Wounded, and the Attacker should simply ensure that the Wounds effects are applied when appropriate.

### Wounds Outside of Combat

Outside of Combat, one is assumed to be able to tend to their Wounds and keep them from festering or otherwise bothering them. However, upon reentering Combat, the Wound's effects will resume after the first round.

### Curing Wounds

In and Outside of Combat, Wounds can be cured directly by craftable items known as Salves (for Physical Wounds) and Elixirs (for Magical Wounds). If one lacks such items, some kinds of magic can help speed recovery, but they will still have to spend Energy dice while Resting or Meditating to recover from Wounds instead. (See **Survival** for more details on these kinds of recovery)

## Wounds in Detail

Each Damage type in the game, as well as the corresponding Wound and Wound Effect, are listed below.

### Physical Damage Types

Format: "Damage Type; Wound: Wound Effect"

- **Blunt**; *Fracture*: The Wound die is applied as extra Blunt Damage with every attack received.
- **Slashing**; *Bleed*: Take the Wound Die as damage every Round; any Composure restoration you received is reduced by the same amount.
- **Piercing**; *Stuck*: Apply an Action Penalty equal to the Wound die each round to an AR of the Wounded's choice.
- **Blunt/Slashing**; *Gashed*: Take the Wound die as Slashing damage each round; also deal the same die as Blunt Damage when taking damage from any source.
- **Blunt/Piercing**; *Impaled*: Pin the Wounded in place if the attacker remains adjacent; the Wound die applies an Action Penalty to both ARs until healed.
- **Slashing/Piercing**; *Laceration*: Take the Wound die as Slashing damage any time Movement is used; Movement from the Combat Roll is halved, before any bonuses.
- **Blunt/Slashing/Piercing**; *None*: Allows Sword-type weapons to inflict any of the three basic Physical damage types and their corresponding Wounds.

### Magical Damage Types

Format: "Damage Type; Wound: Wound Effect"

- **Fire**; *Burned*: Drop the lowest damage die when attacking with Physical weapons.
- **Lightning**; *Paralyzed*: Immobilized for one Round, preventing all actions; when freed, drop the lowest damage die when attacking with Magic.
- **Water**; *Chilled*: Drop the lowest Defense die when defending with Magic.
- **Earth**; *Petrified*: Decrease rolled Movement by -5 for each new die size applied; instant incapacitation at zero Composure.
- **Frost**; *Frostbite*: Halve effectiveness of all Composure restoration effects.
- **Air**; *Deafened*: Removes hearing, denying Abilities or effects requiring hearing, beneficial or otherwise.
- **Light and Shadow**; *Blinded*: Blindness with -10 to all ARs; if roll at least one Critical with the Combat Roll, can use it to restore the full value of the other die.
- **Blood**; *Sapped*: Drop the highest defense die when defending with physical armor or shields.
- **Metal**; *Gored*: -1 Penalty to Momentum Limit per new die size; starts at 7 if the Wounded has no limit normally.
- **Force**; *Stunned*: +1 Momentum to attacker or an ally with each new die size, but usable only against the Wounded.

## Ending the Fight

While combatants can be formidable and their fighting fierce, no one is obligated to kill, nor, in fact, to even as much as Wound their opponents if they are opposed to it. Likewise, no one is obligated to stand around and die; fleeing or surrender are just as viable.

And when it comes to it, sometimes delivering a killing blow is prudent, for in due time, even a Merciful hand can suffer the bite of Cruelty.

- **Incapacitation:** Reduces a combatant to a non-action state, allowing for Rest and recovery if not disturbed, but leaves combatant vulnerable to a captors whims.
- **Surrender:** Combatants who surrender are considered to be at zero Composure, and vulnerable to the resulting effects. They can resume Combat at any time, but may not be able to surrender again; even in future fights, if abused too often.
- **Fleeing:** Those who wish to flee a fight must reach either of the two Support Areas before they can do so, and if they are fleeing as part of a group, the Combat Grid will shift to the Chase Grid if their enemies give chase to them. See **Advanced Uses of the Combat Grid** for more.
- **Killing Blows:** Reserved for decisive endings, slay the target with a style all your own.

## Describing Killing Blows

It is encouraged for combatants to describe what their Killing Blows look like, and in general there are no limits to what can be done with them, other than the fact that they cannot typically be leveraged for any sort of effect or bonus; they are purely for conveying how the combatant fights and, in some cases, feels about the person, beast, or monster they just killed.

One exception, however, is if one wishes to make use of their Killing Blow as part of Intimidation attempts; cutting off your opponents head and throwing it to their allies is, after all, very Intimidating. In such cases, you will gain a **Leverage Bonus** to your Intimidation Skill Action. (see the **Questing** chapter for more details on how you can use Leverage in social interactions)

## Notes on Surrendering and Fleeing

While the enemies you face may not often have any scruples about turning tail and running for their lives, or simply surrendering to your mercy, you should never unilaterally impose these conditions upon your party.

You should, instead, confer with them, even if out of character, before attempting to do so so that everyone can reach a mutual agreement. This is particularly important if you want to try something cheeky by doing this, but is even more important if you genuinely feel your party can't win the fight. *Talk to them.*

## The Combat Grid: Advanced Uses

The Combat Grid, although initially unfamiliar compared to mapping in other games, excels due to its simplicity and versatility. This section explores advanced mechanics for utilizing the Combat Grid in various scenarios, such as Duels, Sieges, and Chases.

### Advanced Mechanics

The following covers more advanced mechanics that you can utilize on the Grid.

#### Flanking

On the Combat Grid, immediately outward from the Churn exists the Flank Positions. In normal usage, the Flanks are just another Position like any other, but as their name implies, they may be utilized to **Flank** into the Churn. But the Flanks themselves are not immune this, for the Ranged Positions can Flank into them, and the Support Positions into the Center Ranged.

When Flanking, the attacking player is attempting to move, in a single Position change, and attack a target in any inward, adjacent area that they are eligible to move into. When they do this, they are granted +5 to their Action Rating. If they do this immediately after the target has defended themselves, this increases to +15.

For example, if Hagar currently occupies the Forward Ranged Center Area, and wishes to attack Vulsks in the Forward Flank Center Position, they can benefit from Flanking. If Vulsks was in the Forward Ranged Left or Right Positions, however, Hagar would not benefit from Flanking.

#### Terrain Tags

Each Position on the Combat Grid has associated Terrain Tags, which can either simply **Indicate** to combatants certain environmental conditions, or offer **Claimable**, but limited, advantages.

The following compiles the Terrain Tags you can expect to see, but be aware that certain Classes, Magic Effects, and certain kinds of Monsters can create unique Tags beyond the common ones listed here.

#### Aerial and Depth Elevations

The most common, these Tags will always be present as part of the Combat Grid, though may not always be available to take. These Tags, marking Elevation in Combat are typically infinitely claimable by any who have the capability to occupy them, and provide the capability to use Verticality options.

#### Difficult Terrain and Turbulence

One of the more common, particularly in the Wilderness, these Tags indicate that all combatants will have to spend double Movement. If these Tags come with a “+X”, this indicates that attempting to move out of the Position will induce a Composure Saving Throw, with failure knocking the combatant Prone, and wasting their Movement.

#### Obscured

This Tag indicates that all combatants within the Position will take -10 to all Action Ratings, even against other combatants in the same Position, and -15 when attempting to attack at Range. Any who attempt to simply establish Stealth, however, will have no penalty, and gain +10 to their AR to do so.

## **Cover**

This claimable Tag is utilized to note that some form of physical, partial Cover exists within the Position, which provides no benefit against attackers utilizing melee weapons or touch magic, but does provide +10 when Reacting against Ranged attacks, and will block any area of effect (AOE) attacks that could hit them. Cover Tags can often come with a “+X” next to it, which indicates that Cover can be taken by that many ally combatants.

Note, however, that most Cover is not indestructible, and such tags will also have a Structural Point, or SP, number attached as well. If any attacks hit the Cover, such as through blocking AOE, the Cover will only be able to take up to their SP in damage before being destroyed and rendered unusable.

## **Obstacles**

Whether natural or otherwise, Obstacles are indicators of something fully occupying the Position, and preventing any from occupying it. However, they also block line of sight, preventing any combatant from targeting another with ranged attacks if that target is in the Position directly behind the Obstacle, relative to the attacking combatant. Lobbing Fire may only clear these Obstacles if both the Skyward Elevation is available, and the Obstacle does not extend to that Elevation.

For example, if the Churn had this Tag, someone attacking from the Rear Center Ranged could not hit someone in the Forward Center Ranged Position, but could attempt Lobbing Fire if the Obstacle doesn't extend Skyward.

## **Building**

Very common in Cities, the Building Tag is usually an indicator as another type of Obstacle, but willing or capable combatants could claim it, breaking in and using it as though it was an Obstacle to prevent Ranged and AOE Attacks, but with no other benefits to its use.

Like Cover, Buildings will have an SP value, and can be destroyed. Any combatant occupying a Building that's destroyed in this way will take 2d10 Damage, plus 1d10 for every Elevation they fall through as a result.

## **High Ground**

This Tag can either be an indicator, or a claimable Tag, depending on the nature of the scenario. One may find this Tag when out in the wilderness, representing hills, cliffsides, or tree tops. They may also find it in Cities or during Warfare, representing Towers, Walls, or Rooftops.

These Tags raise any who occupy the Position, or claim the Tag, to either the Elevated or Overhead Elevations, without losing the ability to freely descend back to the ground. From the High Ground, those who attack at Range enjoy +10 to their Action Ratings, and those who like to use Verticality are eligible to benefit from the Elevated or Overhead Tags.

## **Trenched**

Similar to High Ground, this tag can either be an indicator or claimable Tag. This Tag is especially common in Warfare, where literal trenches are commonplace, but might also be found in the wilderness as natural formations.

Trenched will prevent all Ranged attacks but Lobbing Fire from being able to connect, but can be very dangerous if an AOE attack is launched into the Position, automatically doubling any damage taken from such attacks.

## **Scenario Grids**

While adventuring, Combat will be common out in the wilderness or deep in a dungeon, but these are not the only ways to end up in a fight, and the following discusses different ways to utilize the Combat Grid for different scenarios. While each option is named as a “separate” Grid, all scenarios utilize the same Combat Grid, but the rules for each will change significantly.

### **The Dueling Grid**

Occasionally, the party will face formidable enemies, such as powerful Dragons or enemy Commanders, who dominate the Grid. Also known as “Bosses”, they often fight by themselves, but can often have a host of allied enemies that you will have to contend with as well.

Bosses remain in the Churn, and as they "move," the surrounding Positions shift accordingly based on the direction they choose to move in. This will often force combatants into disadvantageous positions, and can even force them into the Churn with the Boss, which can be quite dangerous depending on the Boss.

Flanking is restricted to attacking from the three Rear Flank Positions when facing these Boss-type enemies. Despite the boss's influence, regular flanking rules apply to their allies.

Some bosses may have abilities to drastically alter the Grid, potentially scrambling or eliminating Positions entirely, adding a layer of strategic complexity to these encounters.

### **The Siege Grid**

### **The Chase Grid**