

## Combat Rules

### **The Contest:**

Whenever a Player wishes to engage an NPC or another Player in a combative manner, it is called The Contest. A Marshal must be present for this to occur.

**Initiative** (*Standard XP*) After the first round, where the person initiating The Contest has first Initiative, it must then be determined for every following round. *The Marshal will begin a countdown from Ten and when a Player's Initiative number is reached, the Player may then react. Players start with an Initiative of One and increase their number through levels of Initiative purchased. There may also be situational elements that affect Initiative rankings.*

**Combat**-The Marshal will ask the person or persons whose Initiative number is reached what their actions are.

### **Combat Ranges:**

Players will not physically engage in combat; however they will at times be required to position themselves appropriately during combat in relation to their actions they wish to take. The Marshal on hand will make specific determinations based on the situation, but generally, it requires one round/action to change from one combat distance to another.

**Out of the Action**-The Character is in a safe range, outside of interacting with The Contest.

**Ranged**-Anything outside of Hand to Hand and in line of sight of a combatant is considered to be in ranged combat.

**Hand to Hand/Pointblank**-If the combatants could reach out and touch at least each other's fingers, they are considered to be in Hand to Hand (pointblank) range.

**Attacking and Defending**-in the Phalanges Skill System combat actions are resolved very quickly. When you attack, you state your action and for every level you have in a combative skill, you would hold up an equivalent number of fingers to indicate that level. If the defender has any skill that allows them to defend, they will in turn hold up the number of fingers equivalent to the level of skill. The Defender's number is subtracted from the Attackers and any resulting positive number is the amount of damage inflicted.

In situations where it is difficult to see another Player's hands, or it is physically difficult to show your score, you should verbally state your values instead.

You may generally use your Initiative to flee a Contest. Normally this will remove you from Hand to Hand range but not necessarily ranged attacks. Additionally, depend on setting, the Marshal may determine that you cannot easily flee and may make you subject to further attacks.

*For example, Jamie encounters a thief in the wine cellar who looks as if they intend to do Jamie harm. Jamie calls for a Contest and automatically gets first Initiative. Jamie has four levels of Pistol and declares a shot against the thief. The thief is somewhat skilled in Dodge with three levels of Dodge. So, the thief's three levels of Dodge are subtracted from Jamie's four levels of Pistol resulting in one point of damage to the thief. Initiative is now counted down. Jamie has an Initiative of five and the thief an Initiative of four, so Jamie acts first and shoots once again, with the thief taking another point of damage. The thief is in close enough range to move in for hand to hand and uses their Initiative to do so.*

*Jamie still has higher Initiative and acts first again. Now that they are in Hand to Hand (pointblank) range, Jamie takes a penalty of negative two to Pistol skill. Jamie fires, but misses (Jamie's skill in Pistol is now two vs. the Thief's skill in Dodge of three). The thief attacks Jamie with three skill levels in Hand to Hand and indicates such with three fingers. Jamie has two skill levels of Dodge and raises two fingers. This results in Jamie taking one point of damage. Jamie realizes the wily thief cannot be hit in this range with his Pistol and will continue to take damage from the thief's Hand to Hand skill unless Jamie uses an Initiative (or more) to escape the Contest, relies on Pain through Gain (see Fighting Skills) to defeat the thief or uses some other additional skill to assist in the fight (see Fighting Skills).*

*Depending on the setting, backing up and other types of maneuvers are available to change the range. Just remember, the enemy can always follow your movements if they choose.*

Breaking combat down in a more bare bones way, would look like this:

**First Round**-Person A initiates a Contest against Person B by attacking in some fashion with Person A getting first action. Skill levels compared (when appropriate) and damage assessed.

**Second Round**-Marshal counts down Initiative. Person B has a higher Initiative score and takes their action. If it is a combative action, skill levels are compared and damage assessed. Person A then takes their action.

**Third Round/Fourth Round/Fifth Round** etc... This back and forth will continue until some sort of resolution which causes the confrontation to end. Examples might be; a death, someone flees, parley etc...