



# Combat

Combat in the Exalted: Reloaded system is intended to be fast, fun, light, and intuitive. This was one of my primary design goals when I first began thinking of this system. I wanted to avoid specialized subsystems and “special cases” in hopes that the players would be able to approach combat as they would any other skill challenge.

There are three forms of Combat in Exalted: Reloaded: physical, social, and epic. Physical combat is your standard hack-and-slash of bad guys. Social Combat refers to using social skills to “attack” one's opponents with the goal of forcing some sort of concession or to win a debate in front of others. Epic Combat refers to large-scale combat, usually with the PC's in some sort of leadership position. At this point, we'll examine each of these three forms of combat in more detail.

## Physical Combat

Getting into a fight, attacking someone (or something, or defending one's self against the aggression of others) are all examples of physical combat. The idea is to hurt the other person more than they hurt you, thus becoming the “winner.” It involves weapons, armor,

Charms, and a few other factors.

There are three stages of combat: Join Battle, Battle, and Post-Battle. The Join Battle stage is the time when the combatants prepare for the fight. The Battle Stage is where the meat of the action is. It is quite detailed, so we will explain it in greater depth in a moment. The Leave Battle Stage involves bringing the combat to a close. This can include treating wounds, burning the dead, and so on.

### Join Battle

Before the fight even starts (assuming the characters weren't surprised, of course), the characters have a chance to steel themselves for what is to come. At this point, the players may:

- Trigger scene-length Charms for their characters. These are Charms that would have an impact throughout the fight.
- Have their character give a *Monologue*, which “freezes” opponents until it is finished.

In addition, need to determine their Combat Pool and are required to make a *Fatigue Check* for their character to

determine if he or she goes into combat fatigued from wearing armor.

## Battle

This is where 99% of the action takes place. This is where attacks are made, dodges attempted, and damage dished out. Combat takes place over the course of rounds (each roughly 2-4 seconds), with each round consisting of four phases. They are, in order:

- **Declarations:** In ascending order from lowest Awareness to highest, players, and the GM for the NPC's, declare their characters actions for the turn. At this time, players may activate any Extra Action Charms, Initiative-boosting Charms, and must declare their action for the turn (Attack, Dodge, Other) and allocate dice to their *Dodge Pool*, *Attack Pool*, or *Defense Pool* depending on the action taken.
- **Initiative:** Everyone involved determines Initiative with the following formula –  $d6 + \text{DEX} + \text{weapon speed} + \text{any bonuses from Charms}$ .
- **Actions:** Actions are taken from highest to lowest initiative score.
- **Wrap-up:** GM summarizes what has happened that turn and prepares for the next round of combat.

## Post-Battle

At this point, the characters are allowed to resolve the effects of combat. Infection Checks must be made, and perhaps the players might want to have their characters burn the dead or sift through their belongings for clues to their identity.

## Actions

In the Action phase of combat, players have three choices for their character:

- **Attack:** Player chooses one target (unless he or she is using Extra Action Charms), and rolls his entire Attack Pool as an attack against the target. The target, of course, is allowed to cancel dice from this attack from his own Dodge Pool.
- **Dodge:** A Dodge action is a trade-off. While the character can't attack that turn, he or she benefits from a slightly higher *Defense Value* for the turn as well as a Dodge Pool that can be spent as normal.
- **Other:** This could be any other action that doesn't involve attacking or dodging. It could be a bit of acrobatics, movement, a skill check, or anything else.

## Anatomy of an Attack

So how does an attack play out exactly? Again, it's a series of steps:

- **Step One:** Attacker declares target. Target is

allowed to respond by using dice in his Defense Pool to cancel dice in the attacker's Attack Pool.

- **Step Two:** Once Defense dice are spent the attacker can roll his relevant combat skill to determine success or failure against the character's DV. On a failure, the attack ends here. At this point, the attacker may take advantage of the Rule of Six to augment the Raw Damage or to trigger any special effects related to the weapon he is using.
- **Step Three:** Now, damage is calculated. Damage is based on the attacker's strength, bonuses from the weapon, and any bonuses derived from the Rule of Six or Charms.
- **Step Four:** Once the Raw Damage has been calculated, we can then apply it to the target. All characters have a natural soak (based on Stamina), and then any additional soak provided by the armor the character is wearing. Calculate the total soak and add the result of a d6 roll, this is the amount of damage the character's body and armor is able to withstand; anything leftover is considered *Net Damage* and applied to the character.

### *Terminology*

**Combat Pool:** The total number of dice in the character's dice pool for his primary attack skill (Melee, Martial Arts, etc.).

**Monologue:** Before a fight, it's only natural that the participants get a chance to give a rousing speech to their comrades or an invective against their opponents.

**Fatigue Check:** A Stamina + Resistance roll made to determine if the character is tired going into combat because of his or her armor. Each armor has a different Fatigue CR based on its heaviness. Failing this roll gives the character a -1d Dex penalty for the scene.

**Attack Pool:** The number of dice the player has committed to his or her attack (s).

**Defense Pool:** The number of dice the player has committed to his or her defense(s).

**Infection Check:** Character's who take lethal damage in combat must make an Infection Roll (Stamina + Resistance) to avoid becoming infected due to his wounds. The baseline for these Checks is Challenging, but the GM may increase the difficulty by considering other factors (dirty weapons, septic environment, etc.) Failing this rolls means the character's natural healing rate is halved for a number of days equal to the difference between the Challenge Target number and the Skill Roll.

**Defense Value (DV):** The character's static defense value for the turn. In other words, the target numbers other need to beat in order to land a blow.

**Raw Damage:** Raw Damage refers to the damage done prior to the target applying his or her soak effect (from armor, for example).

**Net Damage:** Net Damage refers to the amount of damage a character takes after applying his or her soak. The damage is applied by checking off boxes on the character sheet's health Track.