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# **Fudge in a Nutshell**

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FUDGE RULES FROM THE FREELY  
DOWNLOADABLE FUDGE IN A NUTSHELL  
PAPERS, IN A HANDY PRINTABLE FORMAT

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## **ABOUT FUDGE**

**FUDGE is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of rec.games.design. The basic rules of FUDGE are available on the internet via anonymous ftp at ftp.csua.berkeley.edu, and in book form or on disk 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.**

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## Basic Vanilla Fudge

(or a Condensed Version of Fudge in a Nutshell)



(This is stolen, quoted directly from FUDGE in a Nutshell, available from the Fudge website, [www.fudge-erpg.com](http://www.fudge-erpg.com) in a small PDF file.)

Although Fudge is designed to be customized by each gamemaster, there are some game design decisions at the core of Fudge that are used by most Fudge GMs.

**Characters and Character 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.

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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 and used in Grey Ghost Games products:

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.

### 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

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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.

The trading “values” of various traits and trait levels are:

- 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

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+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

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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.

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**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

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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.

#### FUDGE DICE AND OTHER RANDOM GENERATORS

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:

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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

When setting Difficulty Levels, it may help to keep the statistical results of rolling four Fudge dice in mind:

	Odds of Rolling Exactly on 4dF	Odds of Rolling Target or 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%

#### Wounds

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

Undamaged (no wounds at all)  
Just a Scratch (no real game effect)

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Hurt (-1 to traits)  
Very Hurt (-2 to traits)  
Incapacitated (only the most basic actions allowed)  
Near Death (unconscious; death w/o 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 round, the following formula may be used:

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

Most characters can withstand three Scratches, one Hurt, and one Very Hurt. Further Scratches are marked as Hurts, further Hurts are marked as Very Hurt, etc.

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For more cinematic games, GMs may adjust the wound boxes, allowing two Hurts instead of one, for example.

Fudge games will vary, of course, but many have these simple character creation and action resolution rules at their core. See Fantasy Fudge, p. 88, as an example.

The word "Fudge" is written in a large, white, cursive-style font with a thick black outline, set against a solid black rectangular background.

“Just Fudge it!”

## Fudge Combat Tables

### SAMPLE WOUND FACTORS

Add all applicable offensive factors to determine the offensive damage factor; add all applicable defensive factors to determine the defensive damage factor.

### OFFENSIVE FACTORS:

For Attacker's Strength  
(muscle-powered weapons only):  
Trait modifier (+3 for Superb, -1 for Mediocre, etc.)

### FOR ATTACKER'S SCALE:

Plus the attacker's Strength Scale  
(see Non-human Scale in Combat,  
p. 48).

### FOR WEAPON'S STRENGTH

(Guns, Crossbows, Beam weapons,  
etc.):  
+/- Strength of weapon  
(see Ranged Combat, p. 41).

### FOR MUSCLE-POWERED WEAPON:

-1 for no weapon, not using  
a Martial Art skill  
+0 Martial Art skill,  
or for small weapons  
+1 for medium-weight  
one-handed weapons  
+2 for large one-handed weapons  
+3 for most two-handed weapons  
+1 for sharpness

### DEFENSIVE FACTORS:

For Defender's Damage  
Capacity Attribute:  
Note: Optional — see Damage  
Capacity, p. 43.  
Trait modifier (+2 for Great,  
-2 for Poor, etc.)  
For Defender's Mass Scale:  
Plus the defender's Mass Scale  
(see Non-human Scale  
in Combat, p. 48).  
(If the defender has Mass  
other than Fair, or a gift of  
Tough Hide, it should also  
be figured in.)

### FOR ARMOR:

+1 for light, pliable  
non-metal armor  
+2 for heavy, rigid non-metal armor  
+2 for light metal armor  
+3 for medium metal armor  
+4 for heavy metal armor  
+5 or more for science fiction  
advanced armor  
+ GM-set modifiers  
for magical armor

Note: The value of a shield may be  
subtracted from the opponent's  
skill — see Melee Modifiers, p. 37.

## Fudge Combat Tables

### OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE

#### TACTIC MODIFIERS

+2 to offense, -2 to defense  
+1 to offense, -1 to defense  
Normal offense and defense  
-1 to offense, +1 to defense  
-2 to offense, +2 to defense

### OPTIONAL DAMAGE ROLLS

See Damage Die Roll, p. 50.  
See also Min-Mid-Max Die Roll,  
p. 51, for an alternative wound  
determination method.

### 3d6 Dice Technique

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

### d% Dice Technique

Rolled: 1 2-6 7-18 19-38 39-62 63-82 83-94 95-99 00  
Result: -4 -3 -2 -1 +0 +1 +2 +3 +4



### Sample Graze Severity Table

Damage Factor	Result
<0	Undamaged
0-4	Scratch
5+	Hurt

### SAMPLE SCALE TABLE

Scale	Mass (US)	Mass (Metric)	Example
-6	13	6	Large House Cat
-5	20	9	Fox
-4	30	13	Badger
-3	45	20	Coyote
-2	68	30	Medium Dog
-1	100	45	Cheetah
0	150	68	Human
1	225	100	Leopard
2	333	150	Black Bear
3	500	225	Utahraptor
4	750	333	Grizzly Bear
5	1125	500	Alligator
6	1687	750	Bison
7	1.25t	1.1t	Great White Shark
8	2t	1.7t	Killer Whale
9	3t	2.6t	Allosaurus