



GRIM-N-GRITTY HIT POINT AND COMBAT RULES (VERSION 3.2)

BY KENNETH S. HOOD

For use with the *Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook*, published by Wizards of the Coast®

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Introduction

In a typical d20 game, a character can suffer tremendous physical damage without batting an eye. Arrows poking from his body like a porcupine, flesh still flaming from a recent fireball attack, and a toothy beast gnawing on his leg, the character strides about with aplomb, no more inconvenienced than if he had chipped a fingernail.

Unrealistic? Sure.

Acceptable? Yep.

Most d20 campaign settings were designed with heroic, cinematic feats in mind. Characters are *supposed* to “kill him a bear when he was only three” and be the lone warrior battling evil hordes. To borrow a line, they are expected to “eat thunder and crap lightning’.”

These rules are not for that type of campaign. They are provided as alternative rules for a setting where the fights are quick and brutal, where the monsters are unstoppable and terrifying, and where the players must be very careful or end up very dead. They are designed for a setting where a man can die painfully from a single sword stroke and the claws of the beast can rend even the most skilled warrior from crotch to throat.

These are rules for a dark fantasy or horror setting. Or perhaps one with a simply more “realistic” type of violence.

If you use these rules, your characters will be made of paper in a world where the monsters are made of steel. Dragons will lay waste to legions. A single giant will obliterate cities. Death will await every adventurer with a naked blade. Stealth, maneuver, cunning, and avoidance will become the order of combat.

If this is what you seek in your gaming experience, then you have found it.

Enjoy.

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Overview

The Grim-n-Gritty Hit Point and Combat System attempts to emulate a higher degree of “realism” in combat without sacrificing too much of the abstraction fundamental to the d20 system. “Realism” is in quotes because it is understood that these rules are not realistic in the sense of accurately modeling wound trauma in the absolute sense. Instead, they offer a slightly less abstract means of modeling damage that maintains a high degree of threat for characters of any level.

A brief explanation of the changes to standard d20 combat follows.

Definition of Terms...

Called Shot: An attack in which a character attempts to hit a specific part of his target’s body, such as the hand or eye. A Called Shot imposes a negative penalty to Attack rolls and may have special effects, such as disabling a limb, on a critical hit.

Defense: A character’s ability to avoid being hit. It is used for an opposed roll against an enemy’s Attack score. Defense is based on a character’s Dexterity, class, and class level.

Injury: The degradation of a character’s capabilities as Hit Points are lost.

Pounce: A replacement for the Sneak Attack ability. It grants a modifier to Attack rolls and critical threat range, encouraging the use of Called Shots.

Penetration: The ability to ignore a limited amount of Protection.

Protection: The ability of armor to reduce damage inflicted on a character. The armor’s protection score is subtracted from damage rolled. The remaining damage, if any, is applied to the character’s Hit Points.

Wound Trauma: The immediate effect of a wound that might cause a character to lose actions.

Changes to Hit Points

Hit Points are direct measure of a character’s ability to suffer damage, rather than their ability to avoid it. At lower levels, characters have more Hit Points than their standard counterparts. At higher levels, they will have much, much less Hit Points. Characters do not roll dice to determine their HP totals. They are doled only a small amount of HP as they progress in levels.

Hit Points are heavily weighted by the size of the character or monster. The larger the creature, the more HP it will possess. Monsters tend to have more HP than a humanoid character. This makes monsters extremely tough, moving them towards the literary ideal of Monster. (With this system, it is assumed that the primary conflict of the campaign will be character v. character, rather than character v. monster. A monster can decimate even a well-armed and armored party.)

Changes to Armor

The term “Armor Class” is not used with this system. A character’s ability to avoid damage is Defense. A character’s ability to absorb or reduce damage is Protection.

Because Hit Points no longer represent a character’s ability to avoid damage, characters are given a new class-based statistic called Defense. Enemies perform Attack rolls opposed by a character’s Defense score to determine whether or not an attack hits.

Because characters have fewer Hit Points, armor now *absorbs* damage, rather than preventing a character from being hit in combat.

Other Changes

Characters can suffer severe trauma from a wound. A moderate amount of damage could stun them.

Critical hits work slightly different, multiplying dice rolled, rather than total damage.

Called Shots have an important role in the system. Characters can target specific parts of their opponents’ bodies and disable limbs.

The ability to disable limbs and target vital body parts is based solely on critical hits and Called Shots. This allows the system to implement something along the line of Hit Locations without necessitating a multitude of extra dice rolls in combat.

Questions?

If you have questions about this system, contact Kenneth S. Hood via email at kenhood@hotmail.com or visit his web site, The Sleeping Imperium at <http://sleepingimperium.rpghost.com>. This web site holds the rules and background for a d20 campaign setting fifty million in the future during the twilight of the human race.

Where do these rules fit?

The Grim-n-Gritty Hit Point and Combat Rules are not appropriate for all d20 game settings.

The Sleeping Imperium

These rules were originally created for use with the *Sleeping Imperium*, a dark science fantasy setting created by Kenneth S. Hood. The setting uses unique psionics, magic, and martial arts rules. Psionics are limited and relatively weak. Magic is extremely rare, bears a high price, and ridiculously powerful. Advanced technology and firearms are available to characters. Monsters can lay waste to entire cities.

These rules reinforce the atmosphere of a dangerous world in which the characters struggle for survival.

Good Fits

For fantasy, the *Grim-n-Gritty* rules fit well in a campaign with no, low, or rare magic. Magic takes on a literary rather than cinematic scope. Wizards and other spell-casters become extremely powerful individuals, the cause of fear and trembling, like they are in classical literature.

The rules work well in dark fantasy and horror settings where the characters are supposed to be the little fish swimming with sharks. Monsters and magic are very powerful, as befits this type of genre.

For tactical military, historical, hard science fiction, spy, and post-apocalyptic settings, these rules also make a good fit — assuming the spirit of the game is non-cinematic.

Bad Fits

Any setting that focuses on cinematic combat is a poor fit for these rules. If you wish to imitate action movies or follow the combat and magic model of the core d20 rules, it is best to avoid the *Grim-n-Gritty* rules. If you want to portray mythic heroes able to take on hundreds of foes, then these rules are inappropriate.

These rules do not lend themselves to light-hearted or whimsical settings. They fit best in a dark, grim world.

A Warning about Magic

These rules assume that magic – if you have it in your setting – should destroy nearly anything with relative ease, as spells would if they existed in real life. People should not be able to shrug off a fireball or lightning bolt; they should die.

Some variant rules are provided to “tone down” the damage from spells in the core magic system, but they will still have devastating effect.

If you do not wish to play in a setting where magic is an incredibly destructive force, do not use these rules.

Again, if you are playing in a setting where powerful magic is an everyday occurrence, these rules are probably inappropriate.

Hit Points

In a standard d20 campaign setting, a character receives a large amount of Hit Points as she progresses in levels. This is because Hit Points not only represent her ability to suffer physical punishment and keep going, her Hit Points also represent her ability to turn a serious blow into a less serious one. In other words, her Hit Points represent an ability to roll with blows, dodge attacks, and the like.

In the Grim-n-Gritty system, this is not the case. A character's Hit Points represent *only* her ability to suffer damage and keep going. Hit Points are a measurement of the character's life force, not her dodging ability. Because of this, a character in the Grim-n-Gritty system has much fewer HP than a standard d20 character.

There are two major changes to Hit Points in the Grim-n-Gritty system. First, characters gain fewer Hit Points than normal as they acquire levels. Second, size has a tremendous impact on a character's Hit Point total.

Figuring Hit Points

To figure your Hit Points in the Grim-n-Gritty system, use the following formula:

$$(\text{Base Hit Points} + \text{Bonus Hit Points}) * \text{Size Modifier}$$

Your base Hit Points are derived from your Constitution score. Your bonus Hit Points come from your character class, creature Hit Dice, and any feats, like Toughness. Your size modifier is a multiplier based on your – you guessed it – size.

Step 1: Figure Base Hit Points

Figuring your Base Hit Points is a simple matter. Your Base Hit Points *always* equal your Constitution score. (If you are a creature that has no Constitution score, such as a construct or undead, you have 20 Base Hit Points.)

Step 2: Figure Bonus Hit Points

Bonus Hit Points are slightly more difficult to figure than your Base Hit Points. There are three things that give you Bonus Hit Points: your character class and level, your creature type and hit dice, and feats or other special modifiers.

Bonus Hit Points for Character Class and Level: If you have one or more levels in a particular character class, such as a fighter or rogue, you may get bonus Hit Points from your class. On table HP-1 HP Bonus Progression, find your level in your class' Bonus Progression column. This is your Bonus Hit Points for that class. The bonus Hit Point Progressions for core classes are as follows...

Good Progression: Barbarian, Fighter, Paladin, and Ranger.

Average Progression: Bard, Cleric, Druid, Monk, and Rogue.

Poor Progression: Sorcerer and Wizard.

If you are multi-classed, figure the Bonus Hit Points for each class separately. The results are added together.

For example, a 7th level fighter would use the Good Progression column. The 7th level row on that column shows +7 Hit Points. Therefore, the character gets +7 Hit Points for his class.

Bonus Hit Points for Creature Type and Hit Dice: If you are a "monster," you get Bonus Hit Points based on your Creature Type and Hit Dice. Then, on table HP-1 HP Bonus Progression, find your hit dice on the Bonus Progression column that corresponds to your creature type. This is your Bonus Hit Points for your creature.

The Bonus Hit Point Progressions for core creature types are as follows...

Good Progression: Beast, Construct, Dragon, Magical Beast, Ooze, and Undead.

Average Progression: Aberration, Animal, Elemental, Giant, Humanoid, Monstrous Humanoid, Outsider, Plant, Shapechanger, and Vermin.

Poor Progression: Fey.

For example, a 6 Hit Dice Aberration (Average HP Bonus Progression) would have +4 Bonus Hit Points.

If you are a "monster" with a character class, then add the bonuses for your Hit Dice and class level(s) together.

Bonus Hit Points for Feats and Other Modifiers: Depending on your special abilities, you may get additional bonus Hit Points. For example, the Toughness feat would give you +3 Bonus Hit Points. These extra points are added to the Hit Points from your class level(s) and Hit Dice.

Rule of Thumb...

A simple rule exists for figuring a character or creature's HP Bonus Progression.

d10 or d12 Hit Dice are Good progression.

d8 or d6 Hit Dice are Average progression.

d4 Hit Dice are Poor progression.

Table HP-1: HP Bonus Progression

Class Level - or - Hit Dice	Good	Average	Poor
1	+1	+0	+0
2	+2	+1	+1
3	+3	+2	+1
4	+4	+3	+2
5	+5	+3	+2
6	+6	+4	+3
7	+7	+5	+3
8	+8	+6	+4
9	+9	+6	+4
10	+10	+7	+5
11	+11	+8	+5
12	+12	+9	+6
13	+13	+9	+6
14	+14	+10	+7
15	+15	+11	+7
16	+16	+12	+8
17	+17	+12	+8
18	+18	+13	+9
19	+19	+14	+10
20	+20	+15	+10

Step 3: Figure Size Modifier

Your Size Modifier is based solely upon your size. It is found on table HP-2: Size Modifier to Hit Points. Your Base + Bonus Hit Points are multiplied by this modifier.

For example, a large creature has a modifier of 2. Its Hit Points are doubled. A small creature has a modifier of ½; its Hit Points are halved.

As can be seen, smaller creatures always end up with fewer Hit Points, while larger creatures end up with a lot of Hit Points. This makes size an important characteristic.

Table HP-2: Size Modifier to Hit Points

Size	Modifier
Fine	1/12
Diminutive	1/8
Tiny	¼
Small	½
Medium-size	1
Large	2
Huge	4
Gargantuan	8
Colossal	12

Summary of Process

1. Figure base Hit Points (Constitution).
2. Add bonus Hit Points from class/level and creature type/hit dice.
3. Multiply total by your Size Modifier.

Hit Point Examples**1st Level Human Fighter**

A 1st level Human Fighter with a Constitution of 15 gets 15 Base Hit Points. His class gives him +1 HP (Good Progression, 1st level). He is not a monster, so he does not get any Bonus Hit Points from Hit Dice and creature type. He is medium-sized, giving him a size modifier of 1. His total Hit Points are . . .

$$(15 (\text{Constitution}) + 1 (\text{class})) * 1 (\text{size}) = 16.$$

3rd Level Rogue/14th Level Wizard

This multi-classed human has a Constitution of 9. She gets 9 Base Hit Points from her Constitution. The Bonus Hit Points from her classes are figured separately.

Her Rogue class has Average Bonus Hit Point Progression. A level of 3 on the Average column of table HP-1 provides a result of +2.

Her Wizard class has a Poor Bonus Hit Point Progression. Level 14 on the Poor column of table HP-1 gives a result of +7.

She is not a monster, so she gets no bonus Hit Points from her creature type and Hit Dice. She is medium-sized, giving her a Size Modifier of 1. Her total Hit Points are figured as follows:

$$(9 (\text{Con}) + 2 (\text{Rogue}) + 7 (\text{Wizard})) * 1 (\text{size}) = 18.$$

She has 18 Hit Points.

Monkey

A monkey is an animal (Average HP Progression) with 1 Hit Dice, 10 Constitution, and tiny size.

The animal gets 10 Base Hit Points, derived from its Constitution score. Finding the row for 1 Hit Dice in the Average column of table HP-1, we discover that the little monkey gets +0 Bonus Hit Points.

As a tiny creature, the monkey gets a size modifier of ¼. Its Hit Point totals are actually *divided* by four!

The monkey figures its Hit Points as follows:

$$(10 (\text{Constitution}) + 0 (\text{Hit Dice})) * \frac{1}{4} = 2.5.$$

We round this amount normally, so the monkey ends up with 3 Hit Points.

Red Dragon

A great wyrm red dragon has a Constitution of 31, Hit Dice 40, and colossal size.

Its Base Hit Points (from Constitution) equal 31. It has no character class, so it gains no Bonus Hit Points from this.

A dragon has Good Bonus Hit Point progression. Table HP-1 only goes as high as twenty levels or Hit Dice, so we have to do a bit of extrapolation for the dragon's 40 Hit Dice. The result is +40 Bonus Hit Points.

As a colossal sized creature, the dragon has a size modifier of 12. Its Hit Points are multiplied by a whopping twelve!

The total Hit Points of the creature are figured as follows:

$$(31 \text{ (Con)} + 40 \text{ (Hit Dice)}) * 12 \text{ (size)} = \mathbf{852}.$$

The result is 852 Hit Points for this massive creature.

852 Hit Points for a Dragon?!

Yep. It sounds like a lot, but the poor dragon is getting a raw deal!

The square-cube law states you must cube the amount by which you multiply a creature's size to determine how much you should multiply its mass for the new size. For instance, if you double a creature's size, you multiply its mass by eight (2 cubed).

Let's assume a dragon is based on a lizard, about 1' long and weighing one pound.

Now let's assume the dragon is 120' long. That is 120x the size of the lizard.

Cube the 120 and multiply it by 1 pound. *Voila!* Your dragon weighs 1,728,000 pounds!

Sadly enough, this figures out to less 1 Hit Point *per ton*.

Defense

In the Grim-n-Gritty rules, Defense *replaces* Armor Class as the mechanic by which a character avoids being hit in combat.

Defense represents a character's ability to roll with blows, dodge attacks, and actively avoid being hit. It is a score derived from the character's class and level, modified by Dexterity, dodge, shield, and similar bonuses.

Using Defense

Whenever a character is attacked, an opposed d20 roll occurs. The defender rolls 1d20 + Defense. The attacker rolls 1d20 + Attack value. If the attacker rolls higher than the defender, the attack hits. If the attacker rolls equal to or less than the defender, the attack misses. Ties on the roll always go to the defender.

If the attacker rolls a '1,' the attack is an automatic miss. If the attacker rolls a '20,' the attack is an automatic hit. If the defender rolls a '1,' the attack is an automatic hit. If the defender rolls a '20,' the attack is an automatic miss. If both the attacker and the defender roll a '1' or '20,' the attack is a miss.

Figuring Defense

Your Defense score is figured using the following formula:

$$\text{Base Defense Bonus} + \text{Dexterity Modifier} \\ + \text{Size Modifier} + \text{Other Modifiers}$$

Your Base Defense Bonus is derived from your character class and level, your creature type and Hit Dice, or both. Your Dexterity modifier is figured normally. Your size modifier is derived from your creature size. The other modifiers to Defense are explained below; these modifiers could be Armor Check Penalties or Dodge bonuses.

Step 1: Figure Base Defense Bonus

Two things determine your Base Defense Bonus: your character class(es) and level(s), and your creature type and Hit Dice.

Defense from Class and Level: To figure your Base Defense Bonus from your character class, find the column on table Ev-1 that corresponds to your class' Base Defense Bonus progression. Then, find the row (in that column) that corresponds to your class level. This is your bonus. The core d20 classes have the following Base Defense Bonus:

Good: Barbarian, Fighter, Monk, Rogue.
Average: Bard, Cleric, Druid, Paladin, and Ranger.
Poor: Sorcerer and Wizard.

If you are multi-classed, figure the Base Defense Bonus for each of your classes separately. Then, add the results together.

For example, a 5th level cleric (Average progression) would have a Base Defense Bonus of +3.

Defense from Creature Type and Hit Dice: If you are a monster, your creature type and Hit Dice determine your Base Defense Bonus. On table Ev-1, find the column that corresponds to your creature type's Base Defense Bonus progression. Then, in that column, find the row that corresponds to your Hit Dice. The number is your base Defense.

The core d20 creature types have the following Base Defense Bonus:

Good: Dragon, Fey, Magical Beast, Monstrous Humanoid, and Outsider.

Average Progression: Aberration, Animal, Beast, Elemental, Giant, Humanoid, Shapechanger, Vermin.

Poor Progression: Construct, Ooze, Plant, Undead.

For example, an 8 Hit Dice giant (Average progression) would have a Base Defense Bonus of +4.

If you are a monstrous character with levels in a character class, add the Base Defense Bonus of your creature type and Hit Dice to the Base Defense Bonus for your class and level.

Rule of Thumb...

A simple rule exists for figuring a character or creature's Base Defense Bonus Progression. Choose the best of the following:

Good Attack Bonus is Good Defense Bonus.
 Average Attack Bonus is Average Defense.
 Poor Attack Bonus is Poor Defense.
 Good Reflex Bonus is Good Defense.
 Average Reflex Bonus is Average Defense.
 Poor Reflex Bonus is Poor Defense.
 A class that cast spells reduces the bonus by one step (e.g., from Average to Poor).

Therefore, a class with a Poor Attack Bonus and Good Reflex Bonus would have Good defense.

Table Ev-1: Base Defense Bonus Progression

Class Level - or - Hit Dice	Good	Average	Poor
1	+2	+1	+0
2	+3	+2	+0
3	+3	+2	+1
4	+4	+2	+1
5	+4	+3	+1
6	+5	+3	+2
7	+5	+4	+2
8	+6	+4	+2
9	+6	+4	+3
10	+7	+5	+3
11	+7	+5	+3
12	+8	+6	+4
13	+8	+6	+4
14	+9	+6	+4
15	+9	+7	+5
16	+10	+7	+5
17	+10	+8	+5
18	+11	+8	+6
19	+11	+8	+6
20	+12	+9	+6

Step 2: Figure Dexterity Modifier

Apply your Dexterity modifier to your Defense Bonus.

If you are wearing armor, your maximum Dexterity modifier is limited by that armor's Maximum Dexterity Bonus statistic. Also, armor imposes a penalty to your Defense bonus, in addition to limiting your Dexterity. Light armor is a -1 bonus, medium armor -2, and heavy armor -4.

Step 3: Figure Size Modifier

Your Size Modifier to your Defense score is derived from your size, using table Ev-2: Size Modifiers to Defense.

Table Ev-2: Size Modifier to Defense

Size	Modifier
Fine	+8
Diminutive	+4
Tiny	+2
Small	+1
Medium-size	+0
Large	-1
Huge	-2
Gargantuan	-4
Colossal	-8

Step 4: Figure Other Modifiers to Defense

Add other modifiers to your Defense score, like Haste and Luck bonuses.

Defense Examples**Fighter in Full Plate**

A 1st level human fighter with 16 Dexterity and wearing full plate armor would figure his Defense score as follows.

First, he uses the Good progression column of table Ev-1, since he's a fighter. This gives him a Base Defense Bonus of +2 for 1st level in that class.

Second, he figures his Dexterity modifier. Normally, he would have a +3 Dexterity bonus. The full plate armor limits his maximum Dexterity bonus to +1 and imposes a -4 penalty to Defense because it is heavy armor.

Finally, he figures his size modifier: medium-sized creature, +0.

His total Defense score is -1: +2 for base, +1 for Dexterity (limited by his armor), -4 for wearing heavy armor, and +0 for medium size.

Multi-classed Rogue/Wizard

A multi-classed human, Rogue 3/Wizard 14, wears a Ring of Deflection +3 and has a Dexterity of 19.

First, she figures the Base Defense Bonus for her classes. A Rogue has Good progression; three levels give her a +3 bonus. A Wizard has Poor progression; fourteen levels on the Poor column of table Ev-1 give her a +4 bonus. Adding these two bonuses together gives her a Base Defense Bonus of +7.

Her Dexterity modifier is +4. She is a medium-sized creature, giving her a +0 size modifier.

The Ring of Deflection adds a final +3 Defense bonus.

All of these bonuses give her Defense +14: +3 (Rogue) +4 (Wizard) +4 (Dexterity) +0 (Size) +3 (Ring of Deflection).

Dragon

A great wyrm red dragon has 40 Hit Dice, colossal size, Dexterity 10, and Good Defense Bonus.

Since table Ev-1 only goes to 20 levels or Hit Dice, we have to extrapolate 40 Hit Dice in the Good column. This gives a result of +22 for the dragon's Base Defense Bonus. The dragon's Dexterity of 10 provides no bonus, but its colossal size imposes a -8 penalty to Defense.

The final Defense score of the dragon is +14: +22 (Hit Dice) +0 (Dexterity) -8 (size).

Summary of Process

1. Figure base Defense Bonus.
2. Figure Dexterity modifier.
3. Figure your Size Modifier.
4. Apply other modifiers to Defense.

Monkey

A monkey is a tiny animal with one Hit Dice, Average Defense Bonus, and Dexterity 15.

Table Ev-1 in the Average column shows a Base Defense Bonus of +1 for a one Hit Dice creature.

The monkey gets a +2 Dexterity Bonus. Its tiny size, while heavily penalizing its Hit Points, works in its favor for Defense; it gives the monkey a +2 Defense modifier.

The monkey's total Defense modifier is +5: +1 (Hit Dice) +2 (Dexterity) +2 (size).

Flat-feet and Defense

If you are caught flat-footed, you lose your Base Defense Bonus and your Dexterity modifier from your total Defense score. You do not lose your size modifier.

Any situation which would normally cause you to lose your Dexterity modifier due to being unprepared, ambushed, stunned, immobilized, and the like, also causes you to lose your Base Defense Bonus.

You do not lose your Base Defense Bonus when attacked by an invisible opponent.

Table Ev-3 lists most of the modifiers that can be applied to your Defense score and whether or not you keep that modifier while flat-footed.

Table Ev-3: Other Defense Modifiers

Modifier	Flat-footed?
Circumstance Bonus	Yes
Cover	Yes
Deflection Bonus	Yes
Dodge Bonus	No
Haste Bonus	No
Insight Bonus	Yes
Luck Bonus	Yes
Profane Bonus	Yes
Sacred Bonus	Yes
Shield Bonus	Yes

Armor and Defense

Armor limits your freedom of movement and reduces your Defense score. If you wear light armor, you suffer a –1 penalty to Defense. Medium armor imposes a –2 penalty, and heavy armor –4.

Inanimate Objects

If an inanimate object is moving, like a pendulum or wheel rolling down a hill, it rolls 1d20 + its size modifier + any other modifiers determined by the referee for its Defense.

Immobile inanimate objects do not roll 1d20 for Defense. They only get their size modifier + any other modifiers determined by the referee. (The same rule applies to immobile, unconscious characters and creatures. They are very easy to hit.)

Monks

Monks (and several other classes) have a special bonus to Armor Class that increases as the character gains new class levels. In the Grim-n-Gritty system, these bonuses are applied to the character's Defense score.

Shields

Shields increase your Defense score. Any enhancement bonuses possessed by the shield also add to your Defense score.

Protection

Because this variant damage system results in characters with fewer Hit Points and aims at a less abstracted approach to combat and damage, it implements a rule in which armor *reduces* the damage suffered by a character, rather than making a character harder to hit.

The capacity of armor to reduce damage is called Protection.

Effects of Protection

Like many things in the d20 System, a number denotes Protection: the higher the number, the more powerful the armor's ability to absorb damage.

The number in a creature's Protection is the amount of hit points the creature ignores from *any* attack that inflicts Hit Point damage (including subdual damage). Both physical and energy attacks are affected by Protection.

Protection reduces the damage from attacks, only. It has no effect on damage caused by the environment, such as ubiquitous high temperatures.

Protection Example...

Jack wears a chain shirt that provides 4 points of Protection. A knife strikes him. His attacker rolls 6 points of damage.

Jack's Protection is subtracted from the knife's damage:

$$6 \text{ (damage)} - 4 \text{ (Protection)} = 2$$

Only two points of damage affect Jack.

Figuring Protection

Your Protection is figured with the following formula:

$$\text{Highest Armor Bonus} \\ + \text{Highest Natural Armor Bonus}$$

Basically, any item, ability, or effect that provides an *armor* or *natural armor* bonus will give you Protection equal to that bonus.

(Shields do not provide Protection. They increase your Defense.)

Bonuses of the same type do *not* stack.

Example of Figuring Protection...

A suit of full plate armor provides a +8 armor bonus. Wearing it gives you Protection 8.

An amulet of Natural Armor +4 gives you Protection 4.

If you were wearing both the amulet and the plate armor, the different bonuses would stack together, giving you Protection 12.

Additional Protection-related Rules

Stacking Damage Reduction and Protection

Protection stacks with Damage Reduction for purposes of reducing the damage from physical attacks.

When a creature with both Damage Reduction and Protection is struck by an attack, the effects of Protection are applied *before* the effects of Damage Reduction.

If a weapon type that ignores its Damage Reduction strikes a creature, the creature still receives the benefit of its Protection.

Example of Protection & Damage Reduction...

A werewolf has a +4 natural armor bonus, which grants it Protection 4. It also possesses supernatural Damage Reduction of 15/silver.

If an opponent attempts to strike the werewolf with a wooden club, his damage drops by 19 points: 4 from the natural armor, 15 from the supernatural properties of the creature.

If the same opponent were to use a silver dagger, he would only have to deal with 4 points of Protection.

Stacking Energy Resistance and Protection

Protection stacks with Energy Resistance for purposes of reducing damage from energy-based attacks.

When a creature with both Energy Resistance and Protection is struck by an attack, the effects of Protection are applied *before* the effects of Energy Resistance.

Protection provides no protection from constant, environmental damage, such as damage from extreme heat in a volcanic region. Protection defends a character from instantaneous attacks only.

Example of Protection & Energy Resistance...

Jack wears a magic ring that gives him 10 points of Fire Resistance. He also wears a chain shirt that provides 4 Protection.

A fireball hits Jack and inflicts 22 points of damage. He ignores the first 14 points of damage: 10 because of Fire Resistance, 4 because of Protection. Jack suffers only 8 points of damage.

Metal Armor

If armor contains a large amount of metal, it provides no Protection against electricity and only half Protection against cold.

Effects of Damage

This section describes the effects of Hit Point loss in the Grim-n-Gritty system. When you lose Hit Points in this system, the effects tend to be more severe than standard d20.

Wound Trauma

If you lose equal to or more than one-half of your *current* Hit Points from a single attack, you suffer immediate Wound Trauma and may only perform a partial action on your next turn.

Again, this is based on your *current* Hit Points.

Wound Trauma is the same thing as the variant d20 rule, *Clobbered*.

Wound Trauma Example...

Jack normally has 18 HP, but the battle has gone against him. He currently has 8 HP.

An enemy gets a lucky blow on Jack and inflicts 4 points of damage. Because this causes him to lose half of his current HP, Jack suffers Wound Trauma and may only perform a partial action on his next turn.

Creatures Immune to Injuries

Creatures that are immune to critical hits, undead, oozes, constructs, and the like do not suffer injuries.

Injuries in Brief...

- At full Hit Points, you have no injuries.
- At 3/4th to 1/2 HP, you have a Light Injury.
- At 1/2 to 1/4 HP, you have a Moderate Injury.
- At 1/4 HP or less, you have a Severe Injury.

For example...

If you had 12 HP, you would suffer injuries as follows.

- At 12 to 10 HP, you have no injuries.
- At 9 to 7 HP, you have a Light Injury.
- At 6 to 4 HP, you have a Moderate injury.
- At 3 or less HP, you have a Severe injury.

Injury

Loss of Hit Points in the Grim-n-Gritty system not only has an immediate effect upon you, but also long-term, negative effects, called *injuries*. Injury represents a wearing down of the your resilience, an increasing weakness that results from long-term, severe wound trauma.

Injuries are based on your current Hit Point total. When your Hit Points dip below a certain level, you are injured. When your Hit Points rise above that level, the injury has been healed.

Injuries do not stack.

There are three grades of injury: *Light*, *Moderate*, and *Severe*. They are described below.

Light Injury

When you have only 75% or less of your Hit Points, you have suffered a *Light Injury*. A Light Injury imposes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, ability checks, saving throws, and skill checks.

Moderate Injury

When you have 50% or less of her Hit Points, you have suffered a *Moderate Injury*. Like a Light Injury, a Moderate Injury imposes a penalty on all attack rolls, ability checks, saving throws, and skill checks. However, the penalty for a Moderate Injury is -4.

Severe Injury

When you have 25% or less of your Hit Points, you have suffered a *Severe Injury*. A character with a Severe Injury has a -6 penalty to all attack rolls, ability checks, saving throws, and skill checks. Also, characters with Severe Injuries cannot run or charge.

Disabled, Dying, and Dead

The rules for disabled, dying and dead conditions remain the same as standard d20 rules, with the following exceptions:

1. The instant death from massive damage rule is not used.
2. The amount of negative Hit Points to which a character can drop before dying equals -10 x the character's HP Bonus Size Multiplier in Table HP-2 (above). Therefore, a huge creature is alive until it reaches -40 HP, while a small creature dies at -5 HP.
3. The chance a creature will stabilize while dying equals its Constitution score, rather than a flat 10%.

Normal Healing

All characters recover lost HP at rate of (1 point + their Constitution modifier) times their size multiplier (see table HP-3) per *week* of rest.

With a week required for healing, it becomes extremely important for characters to seek medical help after severe or even moderate injuries.

Example: A large creature with a Constitution score of 14 automatically gets 1 point of healing and +2 points for its high Con score. The sum of these, multiplied by its size multiplier of x1.5 gives it a healing rate of 5 points per week of rest. (1 + 2 = 3 x 1.5 = 4.5, round up to 5.)

Medical Treatment

Instead of boosting the rate at which a character heals per day, the Heal skill and similar abilities increase the rate at which a character heals per *week*.

Extraordinary Healing

All forms of magical, psionic, and other supernatural or extraordinary means of healing work normally.

Healing Injuries

A character recovers from an injury when her Hit Points rises about the threshold for that injury.

For example, a character with 12 Hit Points suffers a Light Injury when her Hit Points are 9 or less. She currently has 8 Hit Points and a Light Injury. Once she heals to 10 Hit Points, she no longer has a Light Injury.

Called Shots

Because the Grim-n-Gritty system tries to more accurately model damage in combat, it provides rules for Called Shots. Called Shots are attacks that a character tries to target at a specific location on his opponent's body, in an attempt to inflict more serious damage – or – perhaps to pierce a weak point in the target's armor or disable a limb.

The Cost of a Called Shot

Called Shots are difficult to perform. They may not be performed as attacks of opportunity. Your intent to perform a Called Shot must be declared before you roll the dice for your attack. Finally, Called Shots have the following drawbacks:

- A negative modifier is applied to your attack roll. The modifier depends on the difficulty of the Called Shot.
- A Called Shot provokes an Attack of Opportunity from the target.
- Regardless of how many attacks you normally get per round, you may only perform a single attack with a Called Shot.

The Effect of a Called Shot

The effects of Called Shots depend on the body part targeted. Generally speaking, the effects are contingent on you actually hitting the target and inflicting *at least* 1 point of damage to your target.

The effects of various Called Shots and the penalties to your Attack roll for attempting them are listed on table CS-1, below.

Some of the special effects associated with Called Shots are discussed below.

½ Damage

Some Called Shots cause your attack to inflict ½ normal damage. This is because you are aiming at a less vital portion of the body, like the arm or leg.

If you roll a Critical Hit, halve the damage *after* applying all critical multipliers.

Counts as [Disarm or Trip] Attempt

The Called Shot performs a Disarm or Trip in addition to its other effects. If you hit your target, perform the opposed checks for a Disarm or Trip. If you win, the target is disarmed or tripped as normal.

The advantage of using a Called Shot for a Disarm or Trip is that the target may not attempt to Disarm or Trip you if you fail the opposed roll.

Disable [Body Part]

Some Called Shots allow you to disable a part of your opponent's body if you make a successful Critical Hit.

Even if you roll a Critical Hit, you must inflict *at least* 1 point of damage to your target to disable a body part.

A disabled body part imposes a –2 penalty on certain rolls. These rolls are listed in the Called Shots effect.

The penalties for different disabled parts are not cumulative.

Disabled body parts will not heal naturally. Medical treatment over several days or weeks is necessary to repair the damage. Magical or extraordinary means of healing will repair it immediately, assuming they restore the Hit Points lost when the part was disabled.

Creatures immune to critical hits, such as oozes and undead, cannot have their body parts disabled.

Impose a Condition

Certain Called Shots impose a condition on the target, like *blind* or *stunned*, or force a saving throw to avoid a condition. This only occurs if you hit the target and inflict *at least* 1 point of damage.

Creatures immune to critical hits, such as constructs, cannot have a condition imposed on them by a Called Shot.

Increase Critical Multiplier

Because you target an especially vulnerable part of the body, certain Called Shots will increase the critical multiplier of your attack by one step. For example, if your critical multiplier is normally x2, it is increased to x3.

You only have to hit your target to gain the benefit of an increased critical multiplier. You do not have to inflict at least 1 point of damage.

Increase Threat Range

The Increased Threat Called Shot *doubles* your critical threat range. This doubling occurs after all modifiers to your threat range – such as those for a Keen weapon – are applied to your attack.

If you hit your target, you gain the increased threat.

For example, if your threat range is normally 18-20, a successful Increased Threat Called Shot will raise it to 15-20.

The Increase Threat Range Called Shot can be *stacked* with other types of Called Shots, including a Penetrate [Type] Armor Called Shot.

Stacking Called Shots...

The Increased Threat and Penetrate [Type] Armor Called Shots may be stacked with other Called Shots, letting you target a specific body part *and* penetrate a weak spot in the target's armor *and* increase your critical threat range.

If you do stack Called Shot types, the Attack penalties are *cumulative*.

For example, an Increased Threat, Penetrate Light Armor, Arm Called Shot would have a total penalty of –12.

Induce Bleeding

The Major Artery Called Shot causes a target to bleed profusely, assuming you hit and inflict *at least* 1 point of damage.

Bleeding causes the target to lose 1 Hit Point per round, until the wound is bound.

A Heal skill check against DC 20 can staunch the bleeding, but strenuous movement (like combat) will make the wound bleed again.

Creatures immune to critical hits, such as undead and constructs, cannot bleed from injuries.

Penetrate [Type] Armor

You target a weak point in your target's armor with this type of Called Shot. If you hit, you ignore ½ of your target's Protection.

If your target is wearing two types of armor, such as Light and Natural, then you make a roll against the more difficult of the two.

If your target is wearing *force*-based armor, you may not perform this type of Called Shot.

The Penetrate [Type] Armor Called Shot may be *stacked* with other types of Called Shots, including an Increased Threat Range shot.

Silent Kill

This type of Called Shot permits you kill your opponent without him making a sound. For it to take effect, you must inflict enough damage to render him unconscious or kill him with a single blow.

Creatures immune to critical hits, like oozes and constructs, cannot be affected by a Silent Kill Called Shot.

Superior Critical Hit

In the Grim-n-Gritty rules, a Critical Hit only multiplies the *dice* of damage inflicted by an attack. Some Called Shots, like those to the head and vital organ, will multiply *all* of the damage inflicted by an attack.

Defeating Armor with a Called Shot

Called Shots provide two means for circumventing your target's armor.

The first is the Penetrate [Type] Armor Called Shot. It lets you ignore ½ of your target's Protection, if your Attack roll succeeds.

The second is performing a Called Shot to a part of your opponent's body that is not covered with armor. If you can hit a part of the body not covered by armor, you can ignore your opponent's Protection.

For example, if your opponent is wearing a chainmail shirt that does not cover his legs, you could perform a Called Shot to his leg and *ignore* his armor.

As a rule of thumb, if an opponent's body part is even partially covered by armor — such as by a skirt of mail or an open-faced helmet — you cannot ignore his armor with a Called Shot to that part. The best you can do is a Penetrate [Type] Armor Called Shot.

Table CS-1: Called Shots

Type	Attack Modifier	Effect (if attack hits)
Arm	-4	Attack inflicts ½ normal damage. On a successful critical hit, the target's arm is <i>disabled</i> : -2 penalty to Attack rolls, Strength checks, and all Climb, Craft, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Forgery, Alchemy, Heal, Open Lock, Pick Pocket, Swim, and Use Rope checks. If both arms are disabled, you cannot attack or perform any of the skills listed above.
Chest	-4	None.
Ear	-8	Target must perform a Fortitude save against damage inflicted. If failed, he is <i>dazed</i> for 1d4 rounds. On a successful critical hit, the target's ear is <i>disabled</i> : -2 penalty to initiative rolls, and all Balance, Listen, Tumble, and Climb checks. If both ears are disabled, the character is <i>deafened</i> .
Eye	-10	Critical multiplier increased by x1 (e.g., from x2 to x3). Target is <i>blinded</i> in targeted eye for 2d6 rounds. On a successful critical hit, the target's eye is <i>disabled</i> : -2 penalty to Dexterity checks, Attack rolls, Reflex saves, and all Appraise, Alchemy, Craft, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Forgery, Open Lock, Read Lips, Scry, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore (for tracking) skill checks. If both eyes are disabled, the victim is <i>blind</i> .
Foot/Leg	-4	Attack inflicts ½ normal damage. Counts as a <i>trip</i> attempt, in addition to normal attack. On a successful critical hit, the target's leg is <i>disabled</i> : victim cannot run or charge; -2 penalty to Defense rolls, Reflex saves, Dexterity checks, and all Climb, Swim, Jump, Ride, Tumble, Balance, and Move Silently checks. If both legs are disabled, the victim can only move by crawling and loses Dexterity bonus to Defense.
Hand	-6	Attack inflicts ½ normal damage. If an item is held in the target's hand, counts as a <i>disarm</i> attempt. On a successful critical hit, the target's hand is <i>disabled</i> : -2 to attack roll penalty with any weapon held in that hand, and -2 penalty to all Climb, Craft, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Forgery, Alchemy, Heal, Open Lock, Pick Pocket, and Use Rope skill checks.
Head	-6	<i>All</i> damage — dice and modifiers — is multiplied on a critical hit, not just damage dice. Target must perform a Fortitude save against 5 + damage inflicted. If failed, the target is <i>stunned</i> for one round. On a successful critical hit, the target's head is <i>disabled</i> (i.e., target suffers a major concussion): -2 to all Attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks.
Increased Threat*	-4	Doubles the threat range of your attack, <i>after</i> all modifiers have been applied.
Major Artery	-8	On a successful critical hit, target bleeds profusely, losing 1 HP per round until the wound is bound. A successful Heal skill check against DC 20 will staunch arterial bleeding.
Penetrate Light Armor*	-4	Ignore ½ of your target's Protection.
Penetrate Medium Armor*	-6	Ignore ½ of your target's Protection.
Penetrate Heavy Armor*	-8	Ignore ½ of your target's Protection.
Penetrate Natural Armor*	-8	Ignore ½ of your target's Protection.
Silent Kill	-6	If the victim dies or is knocked unconscious by this attack, he makes no sound. It is not possible for the victim to scream or groan. Nothing more than a slight, faint gasp escapes his lips.
Vital Organ	-8	The critical multiplier of your attack is increased by x1 (e.g., from x2 to x3). Also, <i>all</i> damage modifiers are multiplied on a critical hit, not just damage dice.

A * means the Called Shot can be *stacked* with other types of Called Shot.

Additional Combat Rules

There are a few other significant changes that the Grim-n-Gritty rules make to the standard d20 combat system. This section explains them.

Critical Hits Have Reduced Effect

Because – for the most part – creatures and characters possess fewer Hit Points in the Grim-n-Gritty system, the effects of a critical hit are slightly reduced. Instead of multiplying the entire damage of a weapon by its critical multiplier, you multiply the *dice* rolled for the weapon by the critical multiplier.

For example, a weapon that inflicts 1d8 damage with a critical of x2 will inflict 2d8 damage on a Critical Hit. A weapon that inflicts 2d6 damage with a critical multiplier of x3 inflicts 6d6 damage on a Critical Hit. Only the *dice* of damage are multiplied.

If a weapon has an innate modifier as part of its base damage — like some firearms will have 1d10+1 base damage because of barrel length — the base amount is multiplied as well. Enhancement, Strength, Luck, Morale, Martial Arts, Specialization, and other bonuses are *not* multiplied.

Critical Hit Example...

Jack wields a punch dagger: 1d4 damage, critical x3. He has a total damage bonus of +6 (+2 specialization, +2 Strength, +2 from martial arts).
On a normal hit, Jack inflicts 1d4+6 damage.
On a critical hit, Jack inflicts 3d4+6 damage.

Critical Threat Range Improves with Combat Ability

In the Grim-n-Gritty system, your Base Attack Bonus affects your critical threat range with any weapon in which you are proficient. In other words, characters that are adept at fighting are more likely to cause critical hits than characters that are not. Table IT-1 shows the modifier to threat range for a high Base Attack Bonus.

This bonus is added to the threat range of whatever weapon you wield (as long as you are proficient in that weapon). This bonus is applied *after* any threat range modifiers for enhancements, feats, and special abilities.

Table IT-1: Threat Range Bonus for Base Attack Bonus

Base Attack Bonus	Threat Range
0-5	+0
6-10	+1
11-15	+2
16-20	+3
21+	+4

Improved Threat Range Example...

Jack wields a punch dagger: 1d4 damage, critical x3. Normally, the punch dagger threatens a Critical Hit on a roll of 20. Because Jack has a Base Attack Bonus of +7, that threat range is increased by +1. He threatens a critical hit on a 19-20.

Penetration

Penetration is the ability of a weapon or attack type to ignore part of a target's Protection.

A number rates Penetration. The number designates how many points of Protection may be ignored by the attack. If the target has any Protection points left over, they apply normally against the damage normally.

For instance, a Penetration 4 weapon can ignore 4 points of Protection. If the Penetration 4 weapon were used against a target with 6 Protection, only 2 points of Protection would apply against the damage.

Penetration does not ignore a target's Damage Reduction or Energy Resistance.

Penetration Example...

Jack's punch dagger is Penetration 2.
If Jack attacks a target with Protection 9, he ignores the first 2 points of Protection. The target's 7 remaining Protection points apply against his damage normally.
Jack attacks a werewolf: Protection 4, Damage Reduction 15/silver. His Penetration 2 punch dagger reduces the werewolf's Protection to 2, but has no effect on its Damage Reduction.

Standard Weapons with Penetration

Table Pen-1 lists several standard weapons and their Penetration scores.

Table Pen-1: Penetration Values of Standard Weapons

Weapon	Penetration
Crossbow, light	2
Crossbow, heavy	3
Pick, light	4
Pick, heavy	6
Punch Dagger	2
Stiletto (as dagger, can't be thrown)	2

Pounce (replaces Sneak Attack)

Instead of the Sneak Attack game mechanic, which adds several dice to a character's damage, the Grim-n-Gritty rules use a mechanic known as *Pounce* for surprise attacks.

Pounce gives you a bonus to your Attack roll and critical threat range when you catch an opponent off-guard. Also, when you Pounce, you can perform a Called Shot without provoking an attack of opportunity.

How to Pounce

Whenever a character with the Pounce ability flanks an opponent or catches an opponent in a situation that denies the Dexterity bonus to Defense (if any), he gains a bonus to his Attack roll and critical threat range. Also, if you perform a Called Shot, you do not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The primary intent of the bonus is to allow you to easily deliver Called Shot, but it can be used for normal attacks.

If you perform a Called Shot while Pouncing, you are still limited to a single attack per round. Also, you still cannot perform Called Shots as attacks of opportunity.

A character's Pounce bonuses are listed in his class' description, or the bonuses are determined by converting a character with sneak attack to the Pounce mechanic.

Converting Sneak Attack to Pounce

The extra damage dice from a sneak attack can easily overwhelm a character in the Grim-n-Gritty system, so sneak attack is not appropriate. Any character's sneak attack ability should be converted to Pounce, using table Pnc-1, below. Find the character's sneak attack damage bonus and replace it with the corresponding Pounce attack and threat bonus.

Table Pnc-1: Damage Bonus to Attack/Threat Bonus

Sneak Attack Damage Bonus	Pounce Attack Bonus	Pounce Threat Bonus
+1d6	+4	+0
+2d6	+4	+1
+3d6	+5	+1
+4d6	+5	+2
+5d6	+6	+2
+6d6	+6	+3
+7d6	+7	+3
+8d6	+7	+4
+9d6	+8	+4
+10d6	+8	+5

Pounce Overview...

If you have the Pounce ability, you gain the following benefits when flanking an opponent or catching them in a situation that denies a Dexterity bonus to Defense:

- A bonus to your Attack roll (at least +4).
- A bonus to your critical threat range.
- Ability to perform a Called Shot without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Note: You are still limited to the standard Called Shot rules. You cannot perform a Called Shot as an attack of opportunity.

Appendix 1: Variant Rules

The following are variant rules you can use with the Grim-n-Gritty system to increase its “realism.”

Advanced Bleeding

Instead of causing you to lose 1 HP per round, Bleeding has a slightly more realistic effect: you grow more tired from blood loss, then quietly slip into unconsciousness and death.

When you suffer an injury that causes bleeding, such as a Major Artery Called Shot, roll 1d6 + your Constitution modifier. The result is a time limit in rounds (minimum of 1 round). If you have not bandaged your wound or performed some other treatment to cease bleeding at the end of this time period, you will become *fatigued* from blood loss.

If you still have not stopped the flow of blood at the end of this time period, roll 1d6 + your Constitution modifier again. Like before, the result is a time limit in rounds. If your wound is not bandaged before the time is up, you become *exhausted* from blood loss.

If you still have not treated your wound, roll 1d6 + your Constitution modifier again. You become *incapacitated* from blood loss once a number of rounds equal to the result have passed.

If another 1d6 + your Constitution modifier rounds pass, you are *dead* from blood loss.

In other words, once you begin bleeding severely, you will incur one level of fatigue, then become incapacitated, then die, every 1d6 + Constitution modifier rounds.

If you are already bleeding and another attack causes bleeding, subtract two rounds from your time limit.

Disadvantage of Rule: Obviously, it requires a lot of bookkeeping on your part to use this rule. The additional rolls slow down combat. Also, it’s a clunky mechanic.

Advanced Wound Trauma Example...

A character with 18 HP and wearing chainmail (AR 5) is struck by a bastard sword and suffers 12 points of damage. His armor reduces the damage to 7 points. The 7 points of damage are subtracted from his HP total.

This forces him to make a Fortitude saving throw against DC 17 (10 + 7 points of damage). He rolls an 11 and misses his saving throw by 6 points. The wound stuns him for one round.

Advanced Wound Trauma

This variant rule replaces the standard Wound Trauma mechanic.

Whenever you lose Hit Points, you must immediately perform a Fortitude saving throw. If you fail this saving throw, you might become dazed or stunned by your injury.

The DC of your Fortitude save equals 10 + the damage you suffered. (For example, if you suffered 8 points of damage, you would have to save against DC 18.)

If you fail the saving throw, you are *dazed* for one round. If you fail the save by 5 or more points, you are *stunned* for one round. If you fail by 10 or more points, you are *stunned* for 2d6 rounds.

Size Considerations: The size of a creature or character affects the amount of damage necessary to send it into deep shock. Before you figure the DC of the saving throw, you multiply the damage inflicted upon the creature by its size modifier. Table WT-1 shows the modifier, below.

Disadvantage of Rule: The extra saves slow down combat.

Table WT-1: Wound Trauma Save Modifier Based on Size

Size	Modifier
Medium-size	x1
Large	x1/2
Huge	x1/4
Gargantuan	x1/8
Colossal	x1/12

Wounds Normally Cause Bleeding

This variant causes *all* wounds to inflict bleeding, if they inflict a certain amount of damage.

Table BL-1 shows the amount of damage that must be inflicted upon a creature to cause severe bleeding. The bigger a creature, the more damage that must be inflicted. Slashing weapons need to inflict less than other attack types to cause bleeding.

You can use the standard bleeding rules (-1 HP per round) or the advanced with this variant.

Disadvantage of Rule: It adds another level of complexity to combat and requires you to consult a table with *each* attack to determine if it caused bleeding. This slows combat.

Table BL-1: Damage Necessary to Cause Bleeding

Creature Size	Slashing Damage	Other Damage
Fine	1	1
Diminutive	1	1
Tiny	1	1
Small	2	3
Medium-size	4	6
Large	8	12
Huge	16	24
Gargantuan	32	48
Colossal	48	72

Appendix 2: Grim-n-Gritty High Magic

The Grim-n-Gritty rules are not intended for a campaign setting in which magic is common and powerful — especially if that setting uses the core d20 magic system.

All sorts of game balance issues crop up when you attempt to implement these rules in that type of setting. A 3rd-level spell, like *fireball* or *lightning bolt* could easily wipe out a group of high level adventurers.

If you do wish to use the Grim-n-Gritty rules for a high magic setting that uses the core d20 magic system, here's a few suggestions for "balancing" spells.

The Really Grim Option

In this option, you leave spells as are. Basically, a medium level spell will kill *anything*, and magic-users are the most deadly force in your game universe.

Limited Scaling Option

Spells work normally, but the maximum dice of damage is limited to the spell's level + 1. For example, a third level spell can inflict no more than four dice of damage.

Slow Scaling Option

Double the levels necessary to scale up the damage for spells. For example, if a spell normally gives 1d6 damage per level, it gives you 1d6 per *two* levels.

Reduce Damage Dice

Reduce the size of the damage dice to one step lower than normal. Convert dice sizes as follows...

- d4 = 1 point of damage
- d6 = d4
- d8 = d6
- d10 = d8
- d12 = d10
- d20 = d12

For example, if you normally roll 10d6 for a spell, you would only roll 10d4.

Odds = 1

You roll the normal dice for your spell. However, any dice that have an odd numbered result are automatically counted as "1," regardless of the number rolled.

For example, if you rolled 5d6 with dice results of 2, 1, 5, 4, and 6, you would not have "18" as your final result. You convert the odds to ones. This gives you 2, 1, 1, 4, and 6: a result of "14."

The Odds = 1 Rule is probably the best one for converting a pre-existing spell system to Grim-n-Gritty mechanics. You do not have to change any of the spell's mechanics. You do not have to remember any complicated conversions, nor perform additional subtraction or division on your rolls. You still get to roll a fist full of dice for powerful spells.

The Odds = 1 Rule makes magic very unpredictable. You still have the chance to inflict the *maximum*

damage possible for a spell – a devastating thing in the Grim-n-Gritty system. Yet, it tends to force damage to a lower average for spells.

It is a satisfying system for players because they do not feel they are losing anything from the "old rules." Also, it creates a fun "anxiety" when rolling the damage dice of a spell: "Am I going to get a bunch of odds?!"

Things to Avoid

If you do not like the variants offered and intend to create your own. Here are some things you should avoid in your mechanics.

Do not use subtraction to alter damage. The d20 system conditions players and referees to think of subtraction (i.e., negative modifiers) as a *penalty* to rolls. By applying a negative modifier to all the player's rolls with the magic system, you can cause unconscious resentment of the new system. Their conditioning makes them – subtly – think that they are being penalized for playing a magic-user!

Avoid division. It may seem a simple fix to automatically halve the damage of all spells. Not so. Like subtraction, division is used as a penalty in the d20 system. Also, people tend to have a more difficult time dividing numbers than multiplying them; this causes division to slow down the game.

Do not use d2 and d3. Reducing the size of damage dice can be a useful conversion tool. However, avoid using d2 and d3. Rolling only 1d2 or 1d3 is simple. Rolling 20d2 or 20d3 is a tremendous pain. It takes a while to weed through all of the numbers rolled and figure out which ones convert to a 2 or a 3.

Spells and Called Shots

As a rule of thumb, if a spell does not have an Attack roll, it cannot inflict Called Shots.

And Always...

Use the Right Tool for the Right Job. If your campaign is going to focus on the use of the core magic system, then use the core combat mechanics. The magic rules have been thoroughly play-tested and balanced to be internally coherent with the core combat mechanics. You can not go wrong using them as they were intended.

Appendix 3: Core v. Grim-n-Gritty Characters

This section provides you with a sample of a core character and that same character re-made in the Grim-n-Gritty rules. It demonstrates the differences between the systems.

1st Level Rogue

This character is a first level, human rogue. In the Grim-n-Gritty system, he has more Hit Points and slightly better ability to avoid damage in combat. The leather armor enhances his survivability in the GnG rules.

Standard Rules...

Hit Points: 7 (6 + 1 Con)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 14 (+3 Dex, +1 Leather Armor)

Attack: Short Sword +1 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks: Sneak Attack (+1d6 damage).

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1

Ability Scores: Strength 13 (+1), Dexterity 16 (+3),

Constitution 13 (+1), Intelligence 15 (+2),

Wisdom 12 (+1), Charisma 8 (-1)

Grim-n-Gritty Rules...

Hit Points: 13 (13 Con + 0 Class)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Defense: +4 (+3 Dex, +2 Class, -1 Light Armor)

Protection: 1 (+1 Leather Armor)

Attack: Short Sword +1 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks: Pounce (+4 to hit).

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1

Ability Scores: Strength 13 (+1), Dexterity 16 (+3),

Constitution 13 (+1), Intelligence 15 (+2),

Wisdom 12 (+1), Charisma 8 (-1)

5th level Fighter

In the Grim-n-Gritty rules, this fighter has less than half the standard character's Hit Points. However, his plate armor reduces all damage inflicted upon him by eight points.

Standard Rules...

Hit Points: 52 (10 + 4d10 + 20 Con)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 20 (+8 full plate armor, +2 large steel shield)

Attack: Bastard sword +9 (1d10+4)

Special Attacks: None.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +1

Ability Scores: Strength 18 (+4), Dexterity 10 (+0),

Constitution 18 (+4), Intelligence 15 (+2),

Wisdom 10 (+0), Charisma 8 (-1)

Grim-n-Gritty Rules...

Hit Points: 20 (15 Con + 5 Class)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

Defense: +2 (+4 Class, +2 large steel shield, -4 heavy armor)

Protection: 8 (+8 full plate armor)

Attack: Bastard sword +9 (1d10+4)

Special Attacks: None.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +1

Ability Scores: Strength 18 (+4), Dexterity 10 (+0),

Constitution 18 (+4), Intelligence 15 (+2),

Wisdom 10 (+0), Charisma 8 (-1)

9th level Monk

In the Grim-n-Gritty system, this monk has less than one-half his standard Hit Points, but he has superior ability to avoid being hit. The lack of armor is a major drawback for this character in the GnG system.

Standard Rules...

Hit Points: 49 (8 + 8d8 + 8 Con)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dexterity)

Speed: 60 ft.

AC: 19 (+3 Dexterity, +3 Monk)

Attack: Unarmed +7/+4 (1d10+1)

Special Attacks: Stunning Fist.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +8

Ability Scores: Strength 12 (+1), Dexterity 17 (+3),

Constitution 13 (+1), Intelligence 14 (+2),

Wisdom 15 (+2), Charisma 9 (-1)

Grim-n-Gritty Rules...

Hit Points: 19 (13 Con + 6 Class)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dexterity)

Speed: 60 ft.

Defense: +12 (+3 Dexterity, +3 Monk, +6 Class)

Protection: 0

Attack: Unarmed +7/+4 (1d10+1)

Special Attacks: Stunning Fist.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +8

Ability Scores: Strength 12 (+1), Dexterity 17 (+3),

Constitution 13 (+1), Intelligence 14 (+2),

Wisdom 15 (+2), Charisma 9 (-1)

Appendix 4: New Combat Feats

Brute Force [General]

You can muscle your way through an opponent's armor.

Prerequisites: Strength 13+, base Attack bonus 1+.

Benefit: When you take an attack or full attack action in melee, you can gain +1 Penetration for every –2 points you reduce your Attack roll. You can gain a Penetration bonus of no higher than +5 with this feat.

The penalties and bonuses from this feat last an entire round. They may not be changed until your next turn.

For example, if you wanted to perform a Penetration +3 attack, you would reduce your Attack roll by –6.

Delicate Aim [General]

You can carefully and precisely aim your attacks at the expense of inflicting damage.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13+.

Benefit: When you take an attack or full attack action in melee, you can gain a bonus of +1 to your attack roll for every –2 points you reduce your damage. You can gain a bonus of no higher than +5 to attack with this feat.

The penalties and bonuses from this feat last an entire round. They may not be changed until your next turn.

For example, if you wanted to gain a +2 bonus to hit, you would have to reduce your damage by –4.

This feat can reduce your damage to zero, but not lower than that.

Reckless Abandon [General]

You can more easily hit your opponents by lowering your defenses.

Prerequisites: Base Attack bonus 1+.

Benefit: When you take an attack or full attack action in melee, you can gain +1 to your Attack roll by reducing your Defense by –2. You can acquire a bonus of up to +5 to your Attack in this manner.

The penalties and bonuses from this feat last an entire round. They may not be changed until your next turn.

For example, if you wanted a +4 bonus to your Attack roll, you would have to reduce your Defense by –8.

Appendix 4: Frequently Asked Questions

Is it true that a Fighter 6/Cleric 5 can have a Base Defense Bonus of +8 which is one point higher than a single-classed 11th level Fighter's +7 base? If this is true, doesn't it create a serious inequity in the system?

Yes, it is true. No, it does not create an inequity.

If you mix and match classes, you'll reinforce certain characteristics of the class. The process is much like creating a hybrid in genetics. The dominant traits of the parents are accentuated in the offspring, while the recessive traits diminish.

Let's compare the standard d20 traits of a Fighter 6/Cleric 5 to a Cleric 11 and Fighter 11. See table FAQ-1, below.

Table FAQ-1: Hybrid v. Pure Class Comparison

Trait	Fighter 6/ Cleric 5	Fighter 11	Cleric 11
Base Attack Bonus	+10/+5	+11/+6/+1	+8/+3
Fortitude Save	+9	+7	+7
Reflex Save	+3	+3	+3
Will Save	+6	+3	+7

In table FAQ-1, we can see that the multi-classed Fighter/Cleric has a superior Base Attack Bonus in comparison to a single-classed Cleric of equivalent character level. In fact, its bonus is only *one point* below a single-classed fighter — not much of a sacrifice considering the additional spell casting abilities of the cleric. The Fortitude save of the multi-classed character exceeds *both* single-classed characters by a full two points. Its Will save is *three* points higher than the Fighter's and only one point lower than the Cleric. Judged on these statistics alone, the hybrid Fighter/Cleric is a superior character.

However, the Fighter/Cleric lacks the spell-casting power of the single-classed Cleric. It also lacks the plethora of feats available to the single-Classed Fighter. It gains much, but it also denies itself much.

So it is with hybrid characters and Defense Bonuses. Just because a certain mixture of classes can produce a high Base Defense Bonus, do not assume an inequity in the system. The hybrid character may have a single powerful trait, but it loses many others in comparison to the pure ones. In the end, it balances out.

Does subdual damage exist in this system?

Yes. It works normally.

Will you have HP and Defense bonus progression for NPC and Prestige Classes soon?

I do not plan on it.

How are weapons of wounding handled under the bleeding rules?

Use the normal rules for the weapon.

If a character has temporary hit points (from an aid spell, for example), will she suffer Wound Trauma or Bleeding from damage to her temporary hit points?

No. Consider the temporary hit points to act as an "ablative" defense for the character. This increases the importance and usefulness of these spells.

If a subdual damage attack is used with an Advanced Called Shot, what change does this have on the Effects, like disabling a body part?

The effect will end as soon as the victim recovers from the subdual damage.

How does [name of standard spell] work in the Grim-n-Gritty system?

Nope. Not gonna answer that one.

The focus of the Grim-n-Gritty rules is not to present a 100% conversion of the core magic system. The focus is to provide for the atmosphere of the Sleeping Imperium setting. Since the Imperium does not use core magic, it is a distraction (i.e., "not the Way") to completing the Imperium setting.

Why do you hate the core d20 combat mechanics?

I do not.

It is incorrect to assume that because I present an alternative combat system that I believe the core d20 combat system is deficient. I simply wished to create "the right tool for the right job" — a combat system fitted to less cinematic campaign setting.

Why do you think the Grim-n-Gritty system should replace the core d20 combat mechanics?

I do not, yet oddly I often receive strident letters saying I am performing a great evil by presenting this system.

The Grim-n-Gritty system is — first and foremost — a tool for the Sleeping Imperium, my setting. As I created the rules, I discovered that other people were interested in using them for their settings. Thus, I created a modular, generic version. It was never intended to replace the core rules, but supplement them in specific instances.

Versions

- 1.0** – Original document.
- 1.1** – Added FAQ.
- 1.2** – Changed Damage Reduction for armor and natural armor to AR. Changed Armor Piercing to Penetration.
- 1.3** – Added “Applicable Settings” and gray boxes to denote Open Game Content. (04-17-2001)
- 1.4** – Added “The Role of Strength,” standardizing the variant rule wherein Strength no longer supplies an Attack roll bonus.
- 1.5** – Added a listing of SRD weapons with Penetration and the “No Hit Points” variant rule. (04-19-2001)
- 1.6** – Added Injury rules for Hit Point Loss. (04-27-01)
- 2.0** – Removed the variant rules for No Hit Points; I will print that in another document. Cleaned up and streamlined the rules for figuring Hit Points and Defense. Changed several terms. Got rid of all references to Armor Class. Simplified the mechanics for bleeding and wound trauma. (05-08-2001)
- 2.1** – Moved the Severe Bleeding rules to the Variants section because it’s a little clunky. (05-10-2001)
- 3.0** – Reformatted the document. Changed several terms for clarity’s sake. Streamlined the Called Shots rules. (06-30-2001)
- 3.1** - Reformatted the document. Added sample characters. Added two new variant magic rules.
- 3.2** - Added Defense penalties for wearing armor.

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