Vitality Point/Wound Point Variant for d20

by Kelly Reynolds

The VP/WP (Vitality Point/Wound Point) system is a much more accurate representation of a character's ability to shrug off potentially debilitating injuries and turn it into a mere scathing wound. Unlike the abstract representation of standard hit points, the VP/WP system uses two different values to represent your stamina and staying power in combat.

Vitality points represent your endurance, stamina, training, and maybe even a little luck. Wound points represent your toughness and ability to take physical punishment. With these two values combined, they represent your ability to shrug off damage and stay in the fight.

VITALITY POINTS

This part of the VP/WP system is the easiest, as there is no change from the standard d20 Hit Point method. Each character gains a certain number of Vitality points based upon their class level and/or monster hit die, as well as additional Vitality points based upon their Constitution modifier.

Your Vitality point total represents your stamina and your ability to keep moving. You suffer no debilitating effects for losing Vitality points until your Vitality point total reaches 0. At 0 Vitality points, you fall unconscious and are helpless.

Helpless: Opponents receive a +4 bonus to melee attack rolls against you. You can't use any Dexterity bonus to AC. In fact, your Dexterity score is treated as if it were 0 and your Dexterity modifier to AC is -5 (and a rogue can sneak attack you). Additionally, opponents adjacent to you may perform a Coup de Grace.

When your Vitality point total reaches 0, any damage you take beyond that point is dealt directly to your Wound point total. Vitality points do not run into the negatives. They stop at 0.

WOUND POINTS

This part of the VP/WP system is simple to use. Every creature has a Wound point total equal to one half their Vitality point total. For example, a creature with a Vitality point total of 174 would have a Wound point total of 87 (174/2=87).

Your Wound point total represents your ability to shrug off severe injuries. Whenever you suffer Wound point damage (such as a Critical Hit), an equal amount is deducted from your Vitality point total, as you were unable to shrug off the damage. When your Wound point total reaches 0, you are still conscious but you begin bleeding out, losing 1 Vitality point per round, beginning the next round. Additionally, when your Wound point total reaches 0, you become fatigued, and you might even become staggered if your injuries are more than you can bear.

Fatigued: You are unable to run or charge and you suffer an effective -2 penalty to your Strength and Dexterity scores. You must immediately make a successful Fortitude check (DC 10) or become staggered. You can make this check every round until you succeed, but the DC increases by +1 for every round you are fatigued.

For example, if you become fatigued, and you fail your Fortitude check, you become staggered. At the beginning of your next turn you can make another Fortitude check, only this time the DC is 11. If you succeed, you are no longer staggered, but merely fatigued. If you fail the check, you remain staggered. The following turn, you may make yet another Fortitude check, but the DC is now 12. Once you succeed at this check, you do not need to make it again.

Staggered: You lose your Dexterity bonus to AC and you are limited to only one partial action per round.

Bleeding Out: You lose 1 Vitality point per round while your Wound point total is equal to 0. This loss continues until your Wound point total is 1 or greater. A successful Heal check (DC 15) will allow you to regain 1 Wound point, at which point you also stop losing Vitality points.

When your Wound point total reaches 0, any damage you take beyond that point is dealt directly to your Vitality point total. Wound points do not run into the negatives. They stop at 0.

DAMAGE AND INJURY

You can sustain damage to either or both your Vitality score and your Wound score, dependant upon the source. Only critical hits deal direct Wound point damage, but remember, for each Wound point you lose, you also lose a Vitality point. Damage that is not multiplied on a critical does not deal Wound point damage. Instead, it deals Vitality point damage.

For example, if you are hit with a critical hit by a +1 flaming longsword by a foe with a +2 Strength modifier (assume max damage), you will suffer 22 points of damage to your Wound point total, and 6 points of fire damage to your Vitality point total. Remember, fire damage from a flaming weapon is bonus damage which is not multiplied on a critical hit. The same goes for sneak attack damage. Sneak attack damage is not multiplied on a critical hit, thus it only applies to your Vitality point total.

Spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural abilities that can score critical hits, however, can be extremely deadly. For example, a retriever's eye rays can score a critical hit with a ranged touch attack roll on a natural 20. If you are struck with a retriever's eye rays of cold, and the retriever scores a critical hit against you, the rays will deal 24d6 points of cold damage, and all of it is deducted from your Wound point total, and in turn, the same amount is deducted from your Vitality point total as well.

HEALING VP/WP

Healing works a little differently in this system than the standard d20 Hit Point system. When you receive healing, your Wound points are always healed first, as it is representative of your actual physical injuries as opposed to merely decreased stamina or energy. Just like when you suffer Wound point damage and your Vitality point total drops an equal amount, when you receive healing that raises your Wound point total, your Vitality point total also increases an equal amount. In effect, Vitality points are never directly

healed by mundane or magical healing unless your Wound point total is first at its maximum.

However, Heal checks also work differently. A successful Heal check never applies to your Vitality points. It only applies to your Wound point total, which in turn, raises your Vitality point total. Out of mundane healing, rest is the only way to recover lost Vitality points when your Wound point total is back to full.

Natural healing is slow for Wound and faster for Vitality. All characters recover a number of Vitality points equal to their Constitution bonus per hour (minimum one point per hour if no Con bonus or if Con penalty). Wound points return much more slowly. All characters recover a number of Wound points equal to their Constitution bonus per 8 hours of rest (minimum one point if no Con bonus or if Con penalty) For every full day of rest, you recover double this amount.

Even though Vitality points are recovered at a faster rate than Wound points, you must remember that no form of healing whatsoever recovers Vitality points directly unless your Wound point total is already at its maximum.

For example, take a fighter with a Constitution bonus of +5, 100 Vitality points, and 50 Wound points. The fighter's Wound point total is later reduced to 10 in combat, and his Vitality point total is also reduced to 30. After 8 hours of rest, the fighter will regain 5 Wound points (Con bonus +5). In turn, he also regains 5 Vitality points. However, because his Wound point total is not yet at its maximum, he will not recover Vitality points at the faster rate. Essentially, when you suffer serious injuries, your body has to work harder to repair them, which means a lot of your energy and stamina is being burned up to heal your wounds. Once your wounds are fully healed (when you're Wound point total is at its maximum), you will begin to recover your Vitality points at a substantially faster rate.

SUBDUAL DAMAGE

Subdual damage no longer exists separately in this system. In the standard d20 Hit Point system, you have only one type of hit point score, and this score is only reduced when you sustain lethal damage. However, in the VP/WP system, Wound points represent your ability to suck up potentially lethal damage, while your Vitality points represent your stamina. In both systems, the standard d20 Hit Point system and in the VP/WP system, subdual damage is dealt against your Vitality. Sustain enough of it, and you fall unconscious.

Whenever you sustain subdual damage, it is reduced from your Vitality score, just as a normal strike from a mundane longsword. Subdual damage is not tracked separately. In effect, subdual damage and Vitality damage is the same thing. So, in this system, the following simple formula applies: *Subdual Damage = Vitality Damage.*

Subdual damage always applies to your Vitality point total first, unless you score a critical hit. In the standard d20 Hit Point system, you cannot kill nor be killed with subdual damage. However, in the VP/WP system, subdual damage can potentially be lethal. If you sustain enough subdual damage to reduce your Vitality point total to 0, you fall unconscious as normal. If you continue to sustain subdual damage, it is then deducted from your Wound point total.

Essentially, just remember the following phrase; *Subdual damage is normal damage, just as if you strike someone with a warhammer on a regular hit.* In effect, subdual damage no longer exists.

REGENERATION AND FAST HEALING

Regeneration and Fast Healing also work slightly differently with this system. Regeneration always heals Wound point damage before anything else. Only after Wound point damage has been fully healed will Vitality points be healed. Like normal, when regeneration heals Wound point damage, an equal amount of Vitality points are recovered as well.

Regeneration is the exception to the rule that Vitality points never drop below 0. Only certain types of damage are treated as lethal in regards to creature's with regeneration, for this ability converts all but certain types of damage into non-lethal damage. For example, only fire and acid deal lethal damage to a troll. Because of this, even if the troll's Vitality point total is reduced to 0, it still will not suffer any Wound point damage unless fire and/or acid is used against it, even on a critical hit. If you continue to attack a troll, whose Vitality point total has been reduced to 0, and the damage you are dealing is not lethal to it, the troll's Vitality point total will drop into the negatives. No matter how much you pummel a troll with a mundane warhammer, you will never deal Wound point damage to it. However, what you can do is pummel it enough that the troll will not be able to get back up for a very long time. If you deal enough damage to a troll to reduce it's Vitality point total to -300, it will have to heal 301 Vitality points before it can regain consciousness, as 301 recovered Vitality points would bring its Vitality point total back to a positive number of 1.

Fast Healing, though generally slower, also recovers Wound point damage first, which in turn also recovers Vitality points. For example, a creature with Fast Healing 2 recovers 2 Wound points per round, which in turn allows it to recover 2 Vitality points per round. Once your Wound point total is at its maximum, Fast Healing will then begin to recover lost Vitality points.

Creatures with regeneration and fast healing also do not typically bleed out. The reason for this is simple. If you reduce a regenerating or fast healing creature's Wound point total to 0, the very next round, before it loses any Vitality, it will automatically recover at least 1 Wound point, thus halting its Vitality point loss due to bleeding out before it even begins. Remember, you cannot in any way ever reduce a creature's Wound point total below 0.

THE HEROICS OF THE VP/WP SYSTEM

The best part about the VP/WP system is that it can even illustrate the difference between a heroic death, and arguably, a pitiful one.

If your Wound point total is the first to reach 0, you know you are dying, but your fiery spirit and intense passion is keeping you alive, preventing you from simply giving up. Your refusal to fall allows you to stay in the fight, to see it through, to see it done, up until you are no more. At this point, witnesses see you succumb to the inevitable, but you certainly didn't do so without a fight.

However, if your Vitality point total is the first to reach 0, you can no longer stand. No matter how strong of will, no matter how fiery of spirit, no matter how valiant or brave you are, your body simply can't take anymore. You fall where you stand, your fate now in the hands of anyone nearby. Nothing is more sorrowful than seeing a valiant hero fall to the dirt, his weapon, his symbol of freedom, justice and righteousness, leaving his hand as he falls to the ground. The hero is now left at the mercy of the enemy. No longer does the hero's foe have to fight for his life. He simply needs to kneel down beside you and slip his blade into your heart, and probably with a smile. Sometimes you are simply bested. Sometimes you embarrassingly fall to a greater foe. This is symbolic of the real

world, where death is not always heroic, where you don't always go out with a blaze of glory, and where the enemy strikes fear into the hearts of all that witnessed or hear of your death. The enemy has slain a hero.