

1-2-3 Cthulhu

Part 1: Setting

The **1-2-3 Cthulhu** role-playing game is set in a modern world of supernatural horror, science fiction and insanity, with a touch of tragic comedy. It was heavily inspired from the game Call of Cthulhu, based on the writings of H.P. Lovecraft. Think of a mixture of The X Files, Edgar Allan Poe, Ghost Busters, The Twilight Zone, Scooby Do, zombie movies, ghost stories, H.G. Wells, Buffy and Ringu.

In **1-2-3 Cthulhu**, you play a group of investigators in paranormal phenomena. It is a world where you may encounter strange creatures of the night, ancient spirits and god-like creatures from outer space – a world of occult magick, weird science and horrific dimensions of space-time the human mind is too fragile to understand.

Part 2: Making a Character

Concept

First, you should develop a basic concept for your character, based on the specific setting your Director has prepared, e.g. city and timeline. What kind of investigator do you want to play? A nerdy librarian? A biology student from Sweden? A cunning criminologist? A corrupt cop? An eccentric collector of rare items? Anything is possible!

Write a few words in the upper section of the character sheet to describe your character's occupation, appearance, personality traits, etc. Feel free to write up a brief Biography on the back of your character sheet as well.

When done, you can then proceed to assigning dots on your character sheet according to your character idea.

Attributes

You begin with one dot in each Attribute. You have 9 extra dots to add and distribute among the 9 Attributes. Full descriptions of each attribute are on **page 4**. The scale works as follows:

- Under average
- Average
- Above average

This way, if you wanted a totally “average” character, you could add one dot in each Attribute and have 2 dots in each.

Skills and Advantages

You have 19 dots to add and distribute wherever you want among these two categories. The maximum value is 3. The Skills and Advantages are described on **pages 6 and 11** respectively. You gain a bonus 20th dot if you draw your character (see Picture, below).

- No experience or training
- Basic experience or training
- Very good experience or training
- Superior experience or training

Use common sense. You may also have to elaborate on some Skills or Advantages to tie them into your character story, e.g. why would a bookstore owner have superior training in guns? Did she serve a few years in the army when he was younger?

Picture

If you draw a sketch of your character in the upper right corner of the sheet, the Director will grant you one bonus point to place wherever you want in your Skills and Advantages. Alternatively, you can cut out a picture from a magazine or print one you found online.

Point Trading (Optional)

It is possible to trade Attribute points for Skill or Advantage points and vice versa. Each Attribute dot is worth 4 Skill or Advantage dots. For example, during the character creation stage, you could subtract one dot from your Willpower and gain 2 extra dots in Fighting and 2 extra dots in Money (1 Attribute for 4 Skills/Advantages), or do it the other way around.

Sanity

Your starting Sanity is based on your Willpower.

Willpower	Sanity
3	Don't change anything in the Sanity section of your character sheet. You already begin at Confident .
2	Put checkmarks in all the boxes to the left of Confident and Secure. Then check the first box only of Calm .
1	Put checkmarks in all the boxes to the left of Confident, Secure, Calm and Worried. Then check the first box only of Insecure .

Your Sanity can go up or down (mostly down!) in the course of the game. Sanity is further explained on **page 18**.

Defence

Your Defence score is equal to your Stamina + Reflexes. When you are being attacked, you will roll that many dice to avoid injury.

Attacks

Write down the sum of Strength + Fighting as your unarmed attack dice. You will roll that many dice when trying to punch or wrestle somebody.

If your character would have other weapons on her, such as a knife or a gun, write down the number of attack dice for these as well. Consult the weapons table on **page 20**.

Initiative

Your Initiative score is equal to your Perception + Reflexes. It represents your reaction speed and determines who gets to act or move first in a crisis situation or combat.

Part 3: Descriptions

Attributes

Strength

Muscle power

Examples: Break down a door, lift a heavy rock, push somebody down, arm wrestle

- Physically weak or thin
- Average strength
- Strong, buff and muscular

Dexterity

Hand and body coordination

Examples: Do a cartwheel, hit the bull's-eye, dodge out of the way, play piano, dance

- A bit clumsy, slow-moving or below average body coordination
- Average agility
- Agile, very skilful with your hands

Stamina

Physical health, fitness, sturdiness and immune system

Examples: Run a marathon, resist a virus, hold your breath, wake up from a coma

- Easily get tired or sick, out of shape or relatively poor health
- Average health
- Very healthy lifestyle, fit, great stamina

Intelligence

Thinking power, ability to analyze, understand and learn

Examples: Play chess, write an essay, learn a new language, solve the Caramilk secret

- A bit slow at understanding things
- Average intelligence
- Very intelligent

Knowledge

Knowledge acquired through life experience, formal education or training

Examples: Recognize a certain plant, know where Kyrgyzstan is located or how to make a certain chemical

- Never really paid attention in school
- Average education
- You are a storehouse of information and knowledge

Perception

Alertness and ability to perceive things and react to new situations

Examples: Spot someone hiding in the bushes, hear a faint call for help

- Not focused on what is happening around you
- Average alertness
- Very aware and perceptive of details around you

Willpower

Courage, mental strength, power of concentration and self-control

Examples: Pull yourself together under stress, win a staring contest, resist temptation

- Hesitant or fragile, easily depressed, stressed, distracted or tempted
- Average willpower
- Nerves of steel or Zen mind

Charisma

Interpersonal skills, charm, leadership and general likableness

Examples: Seduce somebody, deliver a convincing speech, sell door to door

- Unattractive or relatively poor social skills
- Average charisma
- Everyone loves you

Luck

Fortune at chance events, which are beyond your control

Examples: be at the right place at the right time, have the right item with you, win the lottery

- Why do bad things always happen to me?
- Average luck
- Horseshoe up your ass

Skills

Athletics

Climbing, doing flips, throwing knives, leaping over chasms, kicking a ball, swimming across a river, etc.

Possessed by: athletes, firemen, police officers, gymnasts, fitness or sports buffs

- Play in the local sports club
- Genuinely skilled athlete
- Olympics-quality material

Computer

Using computers in any way: to find information, program applications, hack or crack into systems, install software or repair hardware.

- Your friends often ask for your help to install stuff
- Computer wizard
- Google wants to hire you

Driving

Drive cars and motorcycles in a fast, safe or high-performance way. Every character is assumed to have basic driving skills. Normally, a roll is only required in special situations like car chases, stunts, icy conditions, etc.

Possessed by: many adults, taxi drivers, truckers, racers, bikers, ginos, ambulance drivers

- You can drive standard
- Professional
- Stunt car racer

Empathy

You can relate to people's emotions and get close to them, creating an atmosphere of harmony and understanding and gaining new friends. You can use this ability to bond with people on a personal level and gain their trust, or to calm down somebody who is worried or nervous.

Possessed by: women, caring citizens, gay men, good listeners, counsellors

- People tell you their problems at parties
- You have the gift of making people feel good and at home
- Everyone loves you and tells you all their secrets

Expression

Art, writing, photography, performance, drawing, painting, acting, musical talent, mixed media, art history, etc.

Possessed by: writers, artists, actors, graphic designers, teachers, photographers

- Can play the guitar or juggle or something similar
- Genuinely talented artist
- The next Picasso or Shakespeare

Fighting

Applies to any hand-to-hand fight, including the use of hand-held weapons like knives or clubs, but not guns. Note: Thrown weapons fall under Athletics.

Possessed by: police, bouncers, wrestlers, kick-boxers, street fighters, thugs, ninjas

- You took a few self-defence classes or have basic experience in fighting
- You are fairly well-trained or experienced in the art of combat
- You have won a few international karate tournaments

Guns

The use of firearms.

Possessed by: police, military, security guards, gangsters, biathletes, hunters, snipers

- Basic experience and training with guns
- You're a great shot
- Lucky Luke

Humanities

History, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, political science, cultural studies, etc.

Possessed by: scholars, students, people who watch a lot of documentaries

- You watch the Learning Channel a lot
- University level
- Leading scholar

Ideas

Creative ingenuity to think of new ideas and solutions, remember the right thing at the right time, brainstorm or make mental connections and discover patterns in events.

Possessed by: detectives, inventors, advertisers, artists, creative people

- I've got a cunning plan
- You often get deep and very useful insights
- If you were a caveman, you'd be the one that invented the wheel

Listen

The ability to notice faint sounds, recognize a voice, hear a noise in the distance, etc.

Possessed by: musicians, people with good ears, paranoid people

- You often notice details in a song that other people don't
- You are gifted with an excellent sense of hearing
- You can hear a pin drop 20 m away

Medicine

Ability to identify, treat and heal physical illness and wounds. A successful roll can halve the damage received by someone from an injury or can stabilize somebody who is dying.

Possessed by: doctors, nurses, lifeguards, paramedics, first aiders, homoeopaths

- You can give first aid
- Nurse or paramedic
- Doctor

Memory

Ability to remember details and information

- You remember your way even in unfamiliar places
- Eidetic memory
- You could memorize the phone book

Occult

Knowledge of various supernatural, esoteric and mystical occurrences, practises, traditions, symbols, cults, rituals and mythologies, e.g. astrology, numerology, tarot, palmistry, voodoo, ghosts, UFOs, Qabbalah, alchemy, etc.

Possessed by: fortune tellers, Wiccans, parapsychologists, occultists, new age weirdos

- You've dabbled
- There are things out there, really!
- Aleister Crowley

Persuade

Ability to convince, influence, manipulate or seduce people.

Possessed by: salespeople, lawyers, politicians, conmen

- You know your way with people
- You could be a criminal lawyer
- You could sell ice to the Inuit

Plants / Animals

Knowledge of plants and animals and ability to interact with animals

Possessed by: biologists, farmers, zookeepers, animal trainers, outdoorsy types

- You know not to eat those purple berries
- Experienced gardener or animal trainer
- Lion tamer or eminent botanist

Psychotherapy

Ability to professionally work with people with mental illnesses and help them overcome their issues, whether it be depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, abuse victims, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, kleptomania, etc. This requires special training, and treatment is a lengthy process. With a successful Charisma + Psychotherapy roll, you can help somebody regain the Sanity points lost from one of their specific issues or traumatic experiences.

Possessed by: therapists, counsellors, shrinks, mental health professionals

- You are able to help a lot of people
- Trained mental health counsellor
- Doctor Phil

Reflexes

Ability to react and move quickly in critical situations, e.g. dodge a punch

Possessed by: console gamers, boxers, ninjas, gymnasts

- You've played a lot of Nintendo
- Always the last one out in dodgeball
- You can nearly sidestep gunshots

Repair

The ability to fix and build things, from carpentry to mechanics to simple electronics.

This skill can be used for any form of manual labour.

Possessed by: handymen, carpenters, electricians, mechanics

- You can change a car tire
- Professional construction worker
- If it's broke, you can fix it

Research

Methods and skills to find specific information and items, using libraries, archives, speed reading, specialty stores, etc.

Possessed by: librarians, researchers, scholars, investigators, historians, collectors

- You're good at finding stuff
- Professional researcher
- You could find a copy of the Necronomicon in a few hours

Science

Knowledge of the physical sciences: physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, engineering, oceanography, meteorology, etc. (But biology is normally covered under the Plants/Animals skill.)

Possessed by: scientists, students, engineers, pharmacists

- You understand the major theories and applications
- University level
- Leading scientist

Security

Using the techniques and tools for activities like picking locks, hotwiring cars, setting and deactivating burglar alarms, opening safes and vaults, and other forms of breaking and entering, whether to conduct criminal activities, to prevent them from happening or to deduce how they were accomplished after the fact

Possessed by: criminals, locksmiths, police officers, detectives, security specialists

- You can pick a simple lock
- You can disable a house alarm
- Fort Knox isn't safe from you

Sense Motive

You know when somebody is hiding something and you can tell what they're really up to. You can sense what they might be thinking and where they are going with something.

Possessed by: negotiators, psychoanalysts, clever people

- I think he's hiding something
- You have an amazing insight into others' motivations
- Mind reader

Spot Hidden

Keen eyesight to notice details, see hidden objects, pick up visual clues, etc.

Possessed by: spies, detectives, reporters, proofreaders, paranoid types, peeping Toms

- You often notice coins on the ground that other people overlook
- You have the eyes of a hawk
- You can find the needle in the haystack

Stealth

The ability to sneak around or hide without being seen or heard

Possessed by: criminals, spies, reporters, thieves

- You can hide in the shadows
- You can even run silently
- Ninja clan leader

Streetwise

Life in the city's streets: where the shortcuts are, what areas to avoid at night, where to get drugs, what's the local gossip, how to blend in with the locals, etc.

Possessed by: youth, beggars, punks, taxi drivers, sex workers, police, urban hippies

- You are considered cool by the populace
- Member of a prominent gang
- If you don't know it, it hasn't been said

Wilderness

The art of survival in nature: finding your way and building shelter in the woods, desert, jungle, mountains, arctic, etc. This includes basic tracking, trapping and hunting, but knowledge of what plants to eat or about animals themselves is covered under the Plants/Animals skill.

Possessed by: forest rangers, hikers, hunters, Inuit, mountain climbers, lumberjacks

- You were into scouts or cadets as a kid
- You're an avid and experienced woodsman or hunter
- You climbed Kilimanjaro last year

Advantages

Assistant

A personal servant or assistant who is there to help you. She (or he) is either hired by you or looks up to you as her mentor. She is neither your slave nor really your friend but is there to help and serve you for her intended purpose. Explain who it is in your character profile.

Examples: butler, private chauffeur, research assistant, secretary, doctor's nurse

- Assistant with limited capabilities, e.g. child or untrained adult
- Capable employee with a range of training at her disposal
- Extraordinary follower

Authority

You have a title or a professional status you can use to your advantage. For example, waving a police badge or using the letters PhD after your name can sometimes give you the credibility you need.

Possessed by: officers, professors, doctors, architects, engineers, politicians, priests

- Good status or credentials
- Very good status or credentials
- Outstanding status or credentials

Contacts

A network of people who can hook you up with the things or information you need. The specific nature of your contacts depends on your character concept.

Examples: black market, academic world, religious group, business partners, international organization

- Small network of contacts
- Very good network of contacts in one or two fields
- Huge network of contacts in various fields

Faith

You're a firm believer. You fully trust the will of your God or the spiritual universe you live in. You have an active and intimate connection with your higher spirituality through prayer, etc.

Once per gaming session, you can add your Faith dots to any Willpower or Luck roll, where your higher God is there by your side to help. You may need to role-play this, e.g. by praying, meditating or seeing a "sign" from your God, etc. Note also that being overly religious can also get you in trouble if people don't agree with your beliefs.

Possessed by: Ned Flanders, priests, suicide bombers, faith healers, Buddhists

- True believer
- Priest
- Faith healer

Fame

Your face or name is recognized in public. This can give you many privileges but can also attract unwanted attention.

Possessed by: movie stars, writers, rock stars, politicians

○○○ John Doe

●○○ Well-known within a select subculture or region

●●○ Quite famous

●●● Nationally or internationally famous

Friends

Loyal friends, allies, lovers or family members who are there to help and support you when they can. The number of dots indicates the number of friends. Describe these people and your relationship to them in your character profile. Remember that friends are not your slaves. They have their own lives too.

Languages

All characters begin knowing only their own native language. Every dot in languages gives you fluency in an additional foreign language of your choice. Write down the names of the languages on your character sheet.

Possessed by: immigrants, scholars, international students, travellers, linguists

Examples: French, German, Latin, Swahili, Sanskrit, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Samoan

Money

Your resources, financial comfort, salary or savings. These are relative to the city or country you live in and usually correspond to your profession.

○○○ Low-income lifestyle, e.g. student or dependent

●○○ Middle-class income

●●○ Above average income

●●● Stinking rich

Part 4: Rules

The Golden Rule

The golden rule of **1-2-3 Cthulhu** is: There are no rules!

The game system is meant to be used as a tool, not a crutch. Rules are there to guide and support the flow of the game, not hamper it. If rules ever get in the way of a good story or character development, it is always the Director's discretion to disregard or change whatever she needs.

4A: Dice

Basic Rolls

When your character undertakes an important action, the Director may ask you to make a roll. For example, she may say "roll Knowledge + Science". This is done as follows:

1. Add together the dots you have in the respective Attribute and Skill (or Advantage)
2. Roll that many 6-sided dice
3. Each die that shows a 5 or 6 is considered a success

If you get *at least one success*, then you succeed your action. Two or more successes indicate an even more outstanding success. If you get no successes, then you fail in your action.

Since Attributes and Skills both go up to 3, a basic roll normally involves 1 to 6 dice.

Examples

Yasmina wants to jump over a fence. The Director asks her to roll Dexterity + Athletics. Yasmina has 2 dots in Dexterity and 1 dot in Athletics, so she will roll 3 dice. She rolls: 3, 3, **5**. One success!
She leaps over the fence, no problem.

Kyle is searching through specialized used bookstores for a rare copy of a certain tome. The Director asks him to roll Perception + Research to see if he finds it. Kyle has 2 dots in Perception and 2 in Research, so he will roll 4 dice. He rolls: 2, 1, 4, 2. No successes.
Sorry, Kyle... you can't find the book anywhere.

James is trying to pick up chicks in a local dance club. The Director asks him to roll Charisma + Persuade. James has 1 in Charisma and no dots in Persuade, so he will roll 1 die.

He rolls: 3. No successes.

No girly action for you tonight, James.

Dr. Davenburg tries to use his status as a physician to access to some confidential medical files in an out-of-town hospital. The Director asks him to roll Charisma + Authority. Dr. Davenburg has Charisma 1 and Authority 3, so he will roll 4 dice.

He rolls: 5, 3, 3, 5. Two successes!

“Here’s the key to the classified documents room, doctor! It’s all yours.”

Mel’s apartment is on fire! After the blaze is put out, she runs in to check if her precious diary is still intact. She rolls Luck, for which she has 3 dice.

She rolls: 4, 4, 3. No successes.

Her diary is in ashes.

Success Statistics

If you are curious about the internal math of the dice system used in **1-2-3 Cthulhu**, here are the odds of succeeding, i.e. of getting at least one success on a given roll:

6 dice	91%
5 dice	87%
4 dice	80%
3 dice	70%
2 dice	56%
1 die	33%

Difficult Rolls (2 Successes)

If the Director wants to make an action particularly difficult, she may say that *two successes*, rather than one, are required. As you can see below, this significantly reduces the odds, such that even an expert (with a full 6 dice) will have a challenge.

6 dice	65%
5 dice	54%
4 dice	41%
3 dice	26%
2 dice	11%
1 die	0%

Automatic Success

Sometimes, simply having a skill is enough to warrant an automatic success. For example, the Director could decide that anybody with at least one dot in either Science or Occult would automatically know where to find Sirius in the sky, with no roll necessary.

Extended Actions

An extended action is when you have to keep working on something until you succeed. Your successes keep accumulating until you reach a certain goal.

For example, Harold is trying to fix his broken-down computer. The Director decides it will take 3 successes in total, and each roll will take 1 hour of work. Harold rolls Intelligence + Computers, for which he has 3 dice.

First hour: **6, 6, 4**. Two successes.

Making great progress! Still need to install one more program.

Second hour: **4, 3, 1**. No new successes. Still working away.

Third hour: **5, 5, 3**. With 2 more successes, we're up to 4 now.

Woohoo! His computer is fixed now, after 3 hours of work.

Resisted Actions

When two actions are going against one another, the Director may ask the players to roll resisted actions against each other. The person with the most successes wins. If the result is a tie, the Director may accept the tie (the struggle goes on with no clear winner yet) or may decide you must roll again for a tie-breaker.

For example, Lisa is trying to seduce Carl, who is trying to resist the temptation. She is rolling her Charisma (3) plus Persuade (0), and he is resisting with straight Willpower (2).

Lisa rolls: **6, 1, 4**. One success.

Carl rolls: **2, 1**. No successes.

Lisa is the winner. Harold gives in, and Lisa has her way with him.

For more dramatic effect, it is also possible to have an extended resisted action. Rather than winning after one roll, you must reach a certain level of successes to win.

For example, Kim and Mira are arm-wrestling. The Director asks them to roll Strength + Athletics, and the first one to reach 6 successes wins. This mechanism can also be useful in car chases, etc.

Teamwork

In some situations, the Director may allow you to add up your dice in a team effort. For example, two people are better than one when trying to bash down a door.

Add up all your Strength dice together. The Director decides you will need at least 2 successes on a single roll to break down the door, and you can keep trying as long as it takes.

Special Dice

For a more streamlined play, you can create your own special dice for **1-2-3 Cthulhu**. Simply buy some blank six-sided dice (D6s). You will need about six dice per player. Leave 4 sides blank and label 2 sides with a sticker. The marked sides indicate a success.

1-2-3 Cthulhu is essentially a D3-based system. If you have access to D3s (D6s marked with 1-1-2-2-3-3), then you can run the game with these. Count any 3 as a success.

(Note that you cannot play this game with coins (D2s). You need to use something that has a *one in three* chance of producing a success, such as the default two in six chance of getting a 5 or a 6 on a D6.)

4B: Sanity

Mental health is a central theme in **1-2-3 Cthulhu**. As your character faces unknown horrors and uncovers eldritch secrets the human mind was not meant to know, she is bound to lose it.

Sanity Check

When faced with an exceptionally stressful or horrific event, the Director will ask you for a Sanity Check.

1. Make a **Willpower** roll. If you succeed, lose the number of Sanity points shown before the slash. If you fail, lose the number shown after the slash.
2. If you only lost zero or 1 Sanity point, then your experience was disturbing, but you manage to deal with the stress.
3. If you lost 2 *or more Sanity points*, then you have suffered emotional trauma. Roll Intelligence + Ideas to see how your mind reacts:
 - a. Perversely, if you succeed this roll, it means your mind *fully understands* the horror you have just experienced. Roll on the **Coping Mechanisms** table on page 19 as you go temporarily insane.
 - b. If you fail, then thanks to your stupidity, you manage to repress or deny the weird occurrence, possibly covering it up with a “rational” explanation, a trick the mind uses to protect itself, e.g. it was just the wind

Examples of Sanity Loss

0/1	see a corpse, body part, mangled animal carcass or stream flow with blood
1/2	awake trapped in coffin, witness friend’s violent death, see mangled human corpse, ghoul, Deep One, Byakhee or Elder Thing, read the <i>Zanthu Tablets</i>
1/3	undergo severe torture, see a corpse rise from its grave or someone you know to be dead, see Gnoph-Keh or Dark Young, read <i>Cultes des Goules</i> , the <i>Book of Eibon</i> or the <i>Pnakotic Manuscripts</i>
2/4	read <i>Revelations of Glaaki</i> or <i>De Vermiis Mysteriis</i>
2/5	read <i>Nameless Cults</i>
2/6	see a Shoggoth
3/6	read the <i>Necronomicon</i>
6/30	see Great Cthulhu, Master of R’lyeh

For example, Megan reads the *Zanthu Tablets*. Her Willpower is 1, so she rolls one die. Willpower roll: 3. No successes.

The sanity loss for this harmful knowledge is 1/2. Since Megan has failed, she ticks 2 Sanity boxes on her character sheet from this traumatic experience! This is too much to handle: she will also have to roll for a coping mechanism.

Coping Mechanisms

Each time you lose 2 or more Sanity Points and succeed your Intelligence + Ideas roll, your mind becomes temporarily damaged and instantly latches on to a coping mechanism. The duration of this temporary insanity is up to the Director and depends largely on the specific context and factors. Many of them would last under 1 hour.

The Director or Player may improvise what happens. Or roll either a 20-sided die (D20) or two 6-sided dice (2D6) and look up the results. (If you roll 2D6, do not add up the dice scores. For example, rolling 5 and 3 is the same as 3 and 5 on the chart below.)

D20	2D6	Results
1 or 2	1 and 1 2 and 2	Fainting or screaming fit
3 or 4	1 and 2	Flee in panic
5	1 and 3	Babbling, incoherent, rapid speech or torrent of coherent speech
6	1 and 4	Physical hysterics or emotional outburst (laughing, crying, etc.)
7	1 and 5	Intense fear, perhaps petrifying, or long-term fear of something in particular
8	1 and 6	Homicidal or suicidal mania
9	2 and 3	Hallucinations, delusions or paranoia
10	2 and 4	Mindlessly repeat and imitate what others around you do and say
11	2 and 5	Strange or deviant eating urges (binge eating, dirt, slime, cannibalism, long-term anorexia, etc.)
12	2 and 6	Foetal position or catatonic, or turn completely numb with no will or interest
13	3 and 3 4 and 4	Strange or deviant sexual urges (nudism, groping, masturbation, fetishism, etc.)
14	3 and 4	Go blind, deaf or similar
15	3 and 5	Memory loss or dissociative identity disorder
16	3 and 6	Irrationally blame others or self
17	4 and 5	Obsession-compulsion with safety blanket (something present), idea or action, obsessively keep checking things, etc.
18	4 and 6	Self-abuse or abusive towards others (emotional or physical)
19	5 and 5 6 and 6	Wet or soil self, incontinence
20	5 and 6	Irrational obsession to try to find something (not currently present) to “solve” the problem

To continue the example on the previous page, Megan rolls a 5 and a 6. She becomes obsessed with the information contained in the manuscript, which describes an ancient South Pacific civilization that worshipped a great god called Ghatanothoa. She calls her travel agent and immediately buys a last-minute plane ticket to Fiji, leaving in 48 hours. If she meets her friends before she leaves, they may manage to talk her out of her irrational plan.

Regaining Mental Health

It is possible to regain lost Sanity points in a number of ways. Psychotherapy can help. Antidepressant and antipsychotic medication can also help. Your Director may also grant you bonus Sanity points if your character achieves a fulfilling task, as a sign of relief that life is getting better.

Stark Raving Mad

At zero Sanity points, your character has gone permanently insane. You will probably be institutionalized for a year, or maybe your whole life. Perhaps you become a wandering homeless person. Perhaps you finally decide to commit suicide. The specifics are up to the Player and Director.

4C: Combat

Initiative

Initiative is a way of deciding who goes first in a critical situation. The person with the highest initiative value simply goes first, and others take their turns in order from highest to lowest.

In many cases, the Director may decide to ignore Initiative to keep the story's momentum. She may also decide that one character gets a preliminary action before everybody takes their turn, because that character was actively involved in something, whereas the others are only joining in after.

Attacking

If you wish to make an attack, roll the appropriate attack dice for your weapon. If you get no successes, you missed. If you get at least one success, you hit! For each success on your attack roll, your victim loses one Wound point. For example, if you scored 4 successes on your attack, your victim will check 4 boxes in Wounds. Ouch.

Weapons

Each weapon has different attack dice:

Weapon	Attack Dice
Unarmed*	Strength + Fighting
Knife	Dexterity + Fighting +1
Nightstick*	Strength + Fighting +1
Handgun	Dexterity + Perception + Guns
Rifle	Dexterity + Perception + Guns +1
Shotgun	Dexterity + Perception + Guns +2
Hand Grenade**	12
Dynamite Stick**	15

* Wound levels lost from bashing attacks are considered temporary when they reach the levels beyond "Hurt". This means for example you can knock somebody out, but not kill them, through punching alone.

** These must first be thrown with a Dexterity + Athletics roll. They will cause Wounds to anybody within blast range.

Note that firearms, especially military weapons, are probably very difficult to obtain in most game settings.

Creatures with Resistance

Most supernatural creatures you might encounter in **1-2-3 Cthulhu** are very resistant to conventional, physical attacks. Each point a creature has in Resistance will take away one from your attack successes.

For example, if you are battling the abominable snowman in the Himalayas, and your Director asks you to “attack over 1”, this means you will need to roll 2 successes to cause 1 Wound point to the creature. The creature is so tough, it ignores the first wound.

Defending

If you are being attacked by someone or something, the Director may ask you, for instance, to “defend against 2”. This means something is about to damage you for 2 Wound points. You must roll your Defence dice. Every success on your Defence roll will block or neutralize one potential Wound.

For example, if you roll one success on your Defence roll while defending against 3, then you lose two Wound points.

Armour

Wearing armour will reduce the amount of Wounds taken. Roll Defence normally, and then subtract the Armour at the end. See below for sample armours:

Armour	Damage Reduction
heavy Kevlar vest	1
bullet-proof glass	3

Healing

At the end of every full night's rest, roll Stamina. Regain 1 Wound level per success. This is usually rolled in the morning after sleeping.

If you were doing nothing but resting during that day, add +1 die to your roll. If you also received medical help, add another +1 die.

Death

Once your Wound levels are exhausted, you are considered to be incapacitated and dying. If medical help is not obtained fast, your character will most likely perish.

The Director may require a Luck roll to see what happens. For example, depending on the way she was wounded, the Director may decide that your character is only unconscious or permanently mutilated, e.g. losing an arm, rather than killed.

Note that bashing damage taken from punches or nightclubs will normally render a person unconscious rather than dead.

4D: Experience

Skill Development

At the end of every gaming session, every player may choose one Skill that their character used successfully in the story. It should be a Skill that had some significant or positive impact on the story. Then roll one die. If it is a success, then you may add one extra dot in that Skill. It is also possible to learn new Skills in this manner.

For example, Guido did a lot of lab work analyzing those weird alien-contaminated earth samples, leading to an important discovery. He currently has one dot in Science. At the end of the gaming session, the Director allows him to roll one die for a possible skill development. He rolls a **5**: success! Guido now has 2 dots in Science.