

Skills:

On the following pages you'll find a list of all skills. Within this list you'll find a clear guideline what that skill is for, how it's used, what fitting bonuses and handicaps are as well as general explanations. You'll also find it's starting value, meaning the value with which your character starts the game, excluding all other bonuses he receives on skills.

Talents:

Talents are the (usually) 4 skills (their number can change with traits and perks), that improve quite as fast and that receive a *one time* bonus of 15 points during character creation.

Improving skills and the maximal value of skills:

Skills are improved, by the player dispersing the skill points the character has received when they reach a new experience level. In principle the rule is, that 1 distributable skill point, once invested into a skill, would raise that skill by 1. There are however three exceptions from this rule:

1. For talents, invested skill points count double.
2. Skills that are improved between 100 and 120 points, cost 2 distributable skill points to raise that skill 1 point.
3. Skills that are improved between 121 and 150 (the maximal value of any skill) cost 3 distributable skill points to raise the skill by 1.

Raising a talent from 100 to 101 is possible by either using only one distributable skill point (that would count double) or by spending two distributable skill points and improving to 102.

Combat skills:

Handguns: This is the skill to use pistols and revolvers, in principle all weapons that can be used one handed. This does not only apply to shooting those weapons, but also to taking care of them, cleaning them and small repairs.

The starting value is: $5 + 4 * AG$

Rifles: The skill to use shotguns and rifles, in other words, all weapons that are used two handed. This does not only apply to shooting those weapons, but also to taking care of them, cleaning them and small repairs.

The starting value is: $5 + 2 * AG + ST + PE$

Heavy Weapons: This skill regulates use and care for, up to and including small repairs of really big guns, like machine guns (up to and including gatling guns), flame throwers, rocket launchers and so on.

The starting value is: $ST + EN$

Explosives: The attachment of explosives, the detonating of such and generally the safe handling of these dangerous substance BUT NOT the creation of hiding (creating explosive compounds would fall under *natural sciences*, hiding it somewhere under *hunting traps*).

The starting value is: $2 * PE + 2 * IN$

Throwing: The skill to throw items in a damaging way. Starting with stones and ending with grenades.

The starting value is: $5 + 2 * AG + 2 * ST$

Unarmed: This skill regulates the use of the own body as weapon. Blows, kicks, strangle holds, throws ... all of this falls under this category. But also certain weapons such as knuckle dusters, boxing gloves and so on are used with this skill.

The starting value is: $15 + 2 * (AG+ST)$

Melee: The skill of armed close combat. From knives to sickles to chainsaws.

The starting value is: $5 + 2 * (AG + ST)$

Bow and arrow: The skill to use bows and arrows.

The starting value is: $5 + 2 * ST + AG$

Healing skills:

Doctor: Unlike medics, doctors take care of diseases and complicated surgeries. If you wish to remove a bullet from a friend's stomach, doctor is the skill that you need. Just like you need it to give sick people the right medicine. You can however apply a simple bandage with doctor, as well. Bonuses would be applicable if there has been an earlier experience with this type of treatment, especially good equipment or an experienced assistant.

Handicaps for lack of all the above. If a test on doctor fails, the patient doesn't have to die. He could just as easily get an infection or his situation could improve – but only very slightly – and whatever else you know from House and Emergency Room.

The starting value is: $15 + PE + IN$

First Aid: Is the simple treatment of *wounds*. With first aid one can apply bandages, splint broken bones and perform the most simple surgeries (extracting a bullet from an upper arm, for example), however those can easily go awry.

Bonuses would be applicable – like with the doctor skill – for experience and fitting equipment. If a character uses first aid for an operation that operation is especially handicapped.

The starting value is: $30 + PE + IN$

Empathy: Empathy is a strange skill. To oversimplify, empathy is everything that falls under the heading of 'psychological health', which is why it's found among the healing skills. If you want to calm a distressed, fleeing girl, you use empathy. If a girl you kidnapped ran away and you try to guess where she ran to, you use empathy to set yourself in her place. Furthermore, empathy is your general sense for people. It's also used to try and figure out if you're being lied to.

Bonuses would come, to stay with the small girl example, if your character has once been in the same situation or if you appear to be big, strong and friendly and the girl will therefore trust in you to keep her safe.

The starting value is: $10 + 3 * CH + IN$

Thieving skill:

Lockpicking: Lockpicking is, of course, the art to use lock picks or other tools to open a lock without destroying it. As a matter of principle you need fitting tools to even try it. If you just have a bobby pin or a piece of not very strong wire, it's already enough for a primitive lock.

There are of course bonuses if you come up with a bag full of high end lockpicks. If it isn't a stealthy nightly burglary, maybe a bonus because you can work loudly and with good lighting.

Handicap, as usual, for a lack of easing factors and – especially – the complexity of the lock.

Lockpicking is also used for electronic door and container locks, but to open these you'll need more than a bobby pin – for that you'll need an electronic lockpick.

The starting value is: $10 + PE + AG$

Pickpocketing: This is the art of picking pockets – but also of stealing in a store. Generally, you take items in a way, that no one notices, be those the dollar bills in the pocket of those face to face with you or a pack of ammunition in the gun store. This is also the skill that gets tested when you want to give someone something without anyone noticing.

Apart from various bonuses that help with pick pocketing, it's usually easiest when one is in a crowd. Handicaps, on the contrary, when one is alone with the person to be pickpocketed.

When stealing from a store, the line of sight of the cashier is especially important.

The starting value is: $20 + AG$

Sneaking: Sneaking is – who'd have thought that – the skill to move unseen and unheard.

You can find three pages full of examples for sneaking in the master screen, which is why we'll leave it at this here.

The starting value is: $5 + 3 * AG$

Disguising: This is the skill to mimic **the appearance** of a group. If you want to infiltrate, for example the inner city of Vault-City, a successful disguising test would constitute pulling on one of their Vault suits. Do not confuse this skill with *social adaptation*! The latter is used to mimic the manners and behavior of a typical Vault-City citizen. Characters that are good in disguising will think of each and every detail and can improvise a lot out of a simple cabinet. Characters that are bad in disguising might do better if they sneaked.

The starting value is: $10 + PE + AG$

Technical skills:

Crafting: The skill to use a fitting workshop to create simple or complex components or replacement parts. More details can be found under “Workshop classes”.

The starting value is: $15 + PE + IN + ST$

Repairing (mechanics): This is the skill used to repair simple, non-electric gadgets. This of course also applies to the mechanical part of electric gadgets. Starting with the lever mechanism of the village well to the gas combustion engine of a pre War car. Bonuses as usual for proper tools (or, if you're near one, for a class A workshop), handicaps for having to do without proper tools. This skill is **not** used to build or repair weapons.

The starting value is: $20 + PE$

Repairing (electronics): This is the skill used to repair complex, electric or electronic gadgets. This applies **only** to the **hardware** of a computer, **never** to the **software**. Starting with electric toothbrushes up to the micro fusion engine of a Chrysler Motors Highwayman, someone skilled in this skill can repair it all. Bonuses as usual for proper tools (or, if you're near one, for a class A workshop), handicaps for having to do without proper tools.

The starting value is: $20 + IN$

Computer skills: The skill to use, repair or purposefully damage (hacking) the **software** of a gadget. This applies to everything that has a user interface, be it only four buttons. Bonuses for the simple operation of simple systems, handicaps for very complex hacks (the emperor in San Francisco, for example). There are several computer viruses around, that can also help in hacking.

The starting value is: $4 * IN$

Gun smiting: Gun smiting is the art of creating weapons. Within the rules you'll find several construction guides for self built weapons and all information you need to rebuild a weapon from the weapons list.

The starting value is: $5 + PE + IN + AG$

Sciences:

Natural sciences: Natural sciences is the skill that combines use of chemistry, physics and for the most part even biology. Be it a discussion about what orbits what, sun the earth or earth the sun, or testing the drinking water you took out of the well on radiation and agreeability

Bonuses would be applicable – to stay with the examples – for a book that explains the solar system or some good lab equipment. Handicaps if your own education covers more chemistry than other things and you have no idea how to explain the Copernican system.

The starting value is: $20 + 2 * IN$

Geography and politics: Here you'll find two closely connected topics. The first is, fundamentally, the lore of the land, the second the lore of the people that live on it. This skill does **not** enable the character to know how politics looked or worked before the Great War, but things like: Where are Shady Sands and Vault-City? Why do they keep snarling at each other all the time? Why does this bother Broken Hills, but not New Reno?

Bonuses and handicaps can be based, roughly, on distance. A character from New Reno knows how the political power structure works in his gangster metropolis and where exactly the Cat's Paw is situated on Virgin Street – but won't be that acquainted with the situation in the Boneyard in the deep south of the NCR.

The starting value is: $20 + 2 * IN$

History: Unlike *Geography and politics* this is the skill that enables a character to be acquainted with younger as well as half forgotten history. Some will question why anyone in the post nuclear wasteland should be familiar with say, the history of Ptolemaic Egypt – I will refrain from the cliché that says that there is no useless knowledge and will instead point to the riches an intelligent scavenger will gather in a derelict Vault, if he knows, from studying history, where to find one.

Bonuses and handicaps – similar to *geography and politics* – for distance in time and also for notoriety of the epoch in question.

The starting value is: $20 + 2 * IN$

Tactics: Tactics is the skill to create a battle plan, to adjust that plan when it becomes a fatality at first enemy contact and generally a very useful skill in battle – or before battle is joined. This skill does not only encompass tactics, but also the big brother of tactics: strategy.

Bonuses can be given for familiarity with the battle field (it's easiest to fight in your own neighborhood) or even, if there is still time, by consulting a book like Sun Tzu's "the art of war". Handicaps for lack of time to prepare, lack of familiarity with local conditions etc.

The starting value is: $5 + PE + IN + 2 * CO$

Riding and driving:

Driving (cart): Is, as expected, the skill to drive a car that is moved by one (or several) useful animal. Brahmin carts, Horse drawn carts, dog sleds, details don't matter.

Bonuses are conceivable for especially intelligent or docile animals or a simple trip, handicaps on the other hand for a restive animal and a narrow serpentine way.

The starting value is: $10 + 2 * AU + 2 * WA$

Driving (Engines): This is the skill to drive anything that is self propelled. No matter if this engine is based on gas, batteries, methane or fusion-batteries.

Bonuses and handicaps for example due to the way, the familiarity with the system or even the condition of the vehicle and the "user friendliness" of the system.

The starting value is: $IN + 2 * WA + MT$

Riding: Riding is the skill used to paint beautiful pictures, that capture the essence of the self in contrast to the unendingness of – got you! Riding is of course the skill to impose one's will on a horse by sitting on it.

Bonuses and handicaps depend on the horse (for details, please check under "animals"), on equipment (spurs and riding crop) and, for a small part even, for the skill training.

The starting value is: $5 + 2 * AG + 2 * CO$

Training: Training is, as you can find in much greater details within the rules for animals, the skill to train an animal. Since we gave this skill it's own chapter, we'll leave it at that now.

The starting value is: $2 * EN + IN + PE$

Wilderness:

Survival: This is the skill to survive in the post nuclear wasteland. This skill encompasses the knowledge on how to find potable water, how to erect a tent, which of the meager plants there are edible, how to find the right way based on sun, moon and stars, how to make fire and all that.

Bonuses and handicaps depend on the specific task (starting a fire after it rained is more difficult than during a drought. Since this skill is very complex, we'll leave it at that one example.)

The starting value is: $PE + AG + EN + IN$

Hunting traps: From simple slings to complex explosive traps (one can, after all, hunt Super Mutants as well), all of it is ruled by this skill. Depending on the skill one can succeed in hiding the most complex traps – up to and including burying mines and claymores. If you try to hide mines or claymores however, please remember that priming those is not handled by *hunting traps* but with a test on *explosives*.

Bonuses and handicaps are based on material, the intelligence of the planned prey and the complexity of the trap itself.

The starting value is: $20 + PE + AG$

Tracking: The skill used to follow foot prints, to discover and recognize them and to be able to assign them to specific people or creatures, even to draw conclusions from what you see (“one man, about 1 Meter 80 in size, about 95 kilos of weight”).

Bonuses and handicaps due to floor, wind and weather.

The starting value is: $5 + 4 * PE$

Knots: The skill to knot ropes, cords and hawsers. Be it used to tie up someone, to combine two items or to make fast a small boat.

Bonuses and handicaps depend on the skill level of the needed knot.

The starting value is: $5 + 3 * AG + PE$

Social skills:

Beguile/seduce: This should be obvious, but this is the skill that enables a character to use his (or her) charms – with sexual innuendos – to reach a certain goal. It is irrelevant if that goal is sexual in nature.

Bonuses and handicaps are best applied based on gender/sexual preference of the character that is to be seduced.

The starting value is: $5 + 4 * CH$

Persuade/convince: This is the skill to make someone do something he'd rather not do through use of sweet logic – or a bribe. Or to fire up several people. If you want to hold a flaming oration, you test on this skill. Though flaming orations should also be played out.

Bonuses and handicaps depend on the situation. To bribe a corrupt guard is generally easier than to explain to said guard, that it is of utmost importance to immediately release the imprisoned comrade of the player character free of charge and immediately.

The starting value is: $3 * IN + 2 * CH$

Teaching/instruction: The skill either to teach someone some skill or knowledge that one already knows very well or to explain some complex circumstances in easy words.

Bonuses and handicaps (especially useful for the master): characters can only raise another character's skills by one or two skill points by teaching them. The teacher must have a skill level of at least 85 in the skill that is to be taught and a lesson takes about a week.

The starting value is: $3 * IN + CH$

Haggle/trade: The exact rules for haggle/trade are explained in the special rules.

The starting value is: $20 + 2 * CH + PE$

Social adaptation: This is the skill, to tie in with the example from *disguising*, that enables one to go into hiding in a crowd like Vault-City's inner city, by mimicking the behavior of a group of people. *Disguising* will only work as long as no one speaks to you. From that point onward, this skill takes over.

But also when a poor character is invited to a banquet hosted by the richest traders of the Hub *social adaptation* handles that situation.

Bonuses and handicaps are best applied by the time the character had, to study the group of people he's infiltrating.

The starting value is: $2 * IN + 2 * CH$

Games:

Gambling: Games like Roulette, Crabs or similar games that are based solely on luck are played not by a roll on luck, but by this skill. This skill decides if you win or loose when gambling. Since the creation of clear rules for every kind of gambling game would be a life's work, we recommend bonuses and handicaps based on “difficulty” of the game. We advise the same for stake and earnings.

The starting value is: $4 * LU$

Board games: Chess, Checkers, Shoots and Ladders, Monopoly ... all these games are played by this skill. Basically, if the game is played with tokens and a game board, this is the skill to be tested. Bonuses and handicaps for notoriety and difficulty of the game.

The starting value is: $2 * IN + 2 * LU$

Card games: Card games like especially – but not only – poker are still very much the thing in the post nuclear wasteland. This is the skill used to play them.

To stay with the poker example: those who can bluff or see through a bluff, have bonuses – who can't, has handicaps. A good *empathy* skill might help.

The starting value is: $2 * CH + 2 * LU$

Music: The skill to sing or to play an instrument the player chooses. Obviously you really need a violin to play the violin. Please remember that the choice of musical instruments is limited.

Bonuses and handicaps based on practice, situation and quality of the instrument.

The starting value is: $3 * PE + 3 * AG$

Animation: The skill to perform smaller or bigger attractions, be it to animate or to distract. Sleight of hand, juggling, magic tricks, all of this fall under this heading.

Bonuses and handicaps depend on the audience.

The starting value is: $5 + 3 * AG$

Bodily skills:

Acrobatics: Acrobatics is – in contrast to *athletics* – the skill to manage a **short** exertion. For example jumping up a car ports wall, to push up to the roof with a skilled kick and then to pull oneself all the way up.

Bonuses and handicap – to stay with the example – are dependent on whether or not one leaves one's backpack and machine gun down or if you try that jump with. In principle, if it's a short action and not a long lasting exertion, it's *acrobatics*.

The starting value is: $5 + 2 * AG + 2 * CO$

Athletics: This skill is tested whenever it's about a **long term** exertion, for example a contest in who can do the most push ups or a forced march.

Bonuses and handicaps are of course dependent on the kind of exertion.

In principle, if you need some time for an action, it's tested on *athletics*.

The starting value is: $10 + AG + 2 * EN$

Carousing: The skill to use (or abuse) any kind of drug. This skill is not only tested when using Jet, Buffout or similar, but also when deciding how well you handle your alcohol. Of course you don't have to test on every shot during a night of drinking. You can, for example, do one (maybe handicapped) test on carousing at the end of the night, to see if and how hung over you wake up.

The starting value is: $4 * EN$

Climbing: The skill used to climb up – with or without further equipment – a rock face, a fence, trees or buildings. Bonuses and handicaps based on height, lighting and difficulty of the wall (are there spots to place your hands and feet?)

The starting value is: $2 * AG + 2 * EN + CO$

Body control: Body control is the skill that is based somewhere between *athletics* and *acrobatics*. If you wish to make a contest on who can remain the longest in the starting position of push ups, *body control* is what is tested upon. Also, if you need to know if you scream in pain because of your broken leg, even though it could alert nearby enemies, this would be tested.

The starting value is: $15 + 2 * EN + 2 * CO$

Other skills:

Cooking: Cooking is, of course, the preparation of food. Bonuses and handicaps for available equipment and ingredients.

The starting value is: $20 + IN + PE + LU$

Sensual acuity: The skill to perceive things, that are outside the usual or especially hard to perceive. For example everything that has been hidden, but also details in the landscape that would be lost on most others. Bonuses for example in familiar terrain or because one counted on things being hidden. It's a lot easier to find the secret passage out of the ruin, if you know there is one and are actively seeking it.

The starting value is: $25 + 2 * (PE + IN)$