

Skills:

On the following pages one finds a list of all skills. In this list one finds clear directions what certain skills are used for, how they are used, what kind of bonuses and detriments there are for any given skill and generally some explanations.

Combat skills:

Handguns: This is the skill of using pistols and revolvers, that is, all weapons that can be fired one handed. It not only covers the act of firing these weapons, but also taking care of them, cleaning and small repairs.

Rifles: The skill to handle shotguns and rifles, i.e. all weapons that are fired two handed. It not only covers the act of firing these weapons, but also taking care of them, cleaning and small repairs.

Heavy Weapons: This skill governs the use and care and repair of really large weapons, like machine guns (up to and including Gatling guns), flamethrowers and RPGs

Explosives: The attachment of explosives, the detonation of them and in general, the safe handling of these most dangerous of substances. NOT however, the creation or hiding of them (Creating them falls to *Natural Sciences*, hiding them under *Hunting Traps*).

Throwing: The skill to throw objects in such a way, that damage is the result. It starts with stones and goes up to grenades.

Unarmed: This skill rules the use of the own body as a weapon. Hitting, kicking, choking, throwing people down ... all of that falls into this category. But also certain weapons like for example punch daggers, knuckle dusters, boxing gloves et cetera are used with this skill.

Melee weapons: The skill of armed close combat. From knives to sickles up to chain saws.

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

Healing skills:

Doctor: Doctors – unlike first aiders – take care of things like sicknesses and complex operations. If you wish to remove a bullet from a friend's abdomen, doctor is the skill you need. Just as when you wish to prescribe the correct medication to a sick person. Using doctor one can also apply simple bandages.

Bonuses would be fitting for prior experience with this type of treatment, especially good equipment, a proper operating room or an experienced assistant.

Difficulties for lacking all of that. If a test on Doctor fails, the patient does not have to die. He could just as easily develop an infection, his condition could only marginally improve and whatever else comes to mind after watching House and Emergency Room.

First Aid: Is the simple treatment of *wounds*. With first aid one can apply bandages, splint bones and perform the most simple operations (bullet removal from an upper arm, for example). Those operations can easily be botched, however.

Bonuses are possible – like with Doctor – for experience and fitting equipment. Difficulties for lack of all that. If a character tries a small operation using first aid, it is a lot more difficult.

Empathy: Empathy is a weird skill. Basically, empathy covers everything that falls under the heading of “mental health”, which is why it’s among the healing skills. If you wish to calm down a distressed, fleeing girl, you use empathy. If a girl you have kidnapped tries to flee, and you wonder where she’s running to, you use empathy to step into her shoes. Furthermore, empathy is something like your general knowledge of human nature – you use it for example to detect if you’re being lied to.

Bonuses could be given, to stick with the small girl example, if your character has itself been in a similar situation before or you appear big, strong and friendly and the girl therefore trusts you, because she believes you can provide safety.

Thieving skills:

Lockpicking: Lockpicking is of course the art, to open a lock with a picklock or similar tool, without having to completely destroy it. Fundamentally you first need the proper tools to even try doing it. If you only have a bobby pin or a piece of not very flexible wire, that is already enough for a primitive lock. There are of course bonuses, if you have a high end lock pick in your pocket which you pull out to pick that primitive lock. If it’s not a nightly burglary you might get a bonus for being able to make noise and work with light. Difficulties are given, as usual, for lack of alleviating factors and – especially – the complexity of the lock.

Lockpicking is also used for electronic door and container locks, but to open these one needs more than a bobby pin – for those, you do need an electronic lock pick.

Pickpocketing: This skill is the art of picking pockets or stealing from stores. Generally, you take things without being detected. Whether it’s dollar bills from the pocket of someone or the pack of ammunition from the counter of the weapons store. This skill is also used if you wish to put something into someone’s pocket undetected.

Besides the many bonuses that simplify pick pocketing, picking pockets is easiest in a large crowd. Difficulties come conversely, when one is alone with the mark.

As for stealing in a store, the line of sight of the mark will matter especially.

Sneaking: Sneaking is – who’d have thunk it – the skill to move around unnoticed and undiscovered. About sneaking one can find three pages worth of examples in the combat rules, which is why this explanation stops here.

Disguising: This is the skill to adapt to a group when it comes to **looks**. If you for example wish to intrude into the inner city of Vault-City, a successful test of *Disguising* would result in putting on the usual Vault suit. Do not confuse this skill with *social adaptation*. That one would mean to act and move like a typical Vault-City citizen.

Technical skills:

Repairing (mechanics): This skill is the skill to repair simple, non-electrical devices. This of course also applies to the mechanical parts of electrical devices. Starting with the lever mechanism of the village well, up to a gasoline burning combustion engine, this skill covers it all.

Bonuses, as usual, for good tools (or, if one is near to such a thing, being close to a Class A workshop). Difficulties for when one lacks adequate tools. This skill does **not** enable one to build weapons or to repair them.

Repairing (electronics): This skill is the skill to repair complex, electrical or electronic devices. This applies **only** to **Hardware** of a computer, **never** to the **Software**. Starting with electrical toothbrushes up to the micro fusion engine of a Chrysler Motors Highwayman one can fix everything.

Bonuses as usual for good tools (or, if one is close by, a Class A Workshop). Difficulties for when one has to deal without proper tools.

Computer skills: The skill to use, maintain or purposely damage (hacking) the **Software** of an electronic device. This applies to everything with an interface device, even if its just four buttons. Bonuses for simple use of simple systems, difficulties for complex hacks (the Emperor in San Francisco, for example). For hacks there are also several viruses to have, that make hacking easier.

Crafting: The skill to create things that are not firearms in workshops. Bonuses for the simplicity of what one is trying to build and through the fitting extraordinary skills.

Gun smithing: *Gun smithing* is the art of crafting firearms. On this page one finds several building instructions for self built weapons and all information you'd need, to have a character build a rifle from the weapons list.

Sciences:

Natural sciences: *Natural sciences* is the skill that combines the knowledge and use of chemistry and physics and to a large extent, also biology. Whether it's a heated discussion about which revolves around which, sun around earth or earth around sun or testing the drinking water out of the well for radiation and agreeableness.

Bonuses – to remain with the examples – for a book that explains the solar system or a good laboratory set. Detriments, if the own education revolved more around chemistry and one therefore does not know how to explain the Copernican worldview.

Geography and politics: These are two well connected themes. The first is basically the lore of the land, the second the lore of the people living on that land. This skill does **not** enable a character to know about the politics of before the Great War, but to know things like: where are Shady Sands and Vault-City? Why are those two cities constantly snarling at each other? Why does this bother Broken Hills, but not New Reno?

Bonuses and difficulties can roughly be tied to distance. A character from New Reno knows well, how the power politics in the crime metropolis work and where on the Virgin Street one can find the Cat's Paw – but won't know as much about the current situation in the Boneyard far to the south of the NCR.

History: Unlike *Geography and politics* this here is the skill that allows a character to be familiar with both recent history as well as with half forgotten history. Some would wonder why one needs to know the history of ptolemaic Egypt in a post-nuclear Wasteland – I will spare those people the cliché that no knowledge is useless and instead point to the riches, that a smart gatherer could find, for example, in a deserted Vault, if his studies of history reveal where one lies.

Bonuses and difficulties – similar to *Geography and politics* – are best given by distance in time and also by degree of popularity of the epoch.

Tactics: Tactics is the skill to develop a battle plan, to modify it when it has become the first casualty of the battle and is generally very useful in combat – or before combat. This skill not only covers tactics in the classical sense, but also its big brother: strategy.

Bonuses on a *tactics* test can be given for example for familiarity with the battlefield (it's easier to fight in one's own back yard) or – if the time allows it – by looking for counsel in a book like Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.

Difficulties for lack of time to prepare, lack of familiarity with local circumstances and so on.

Riding and driving:

Driving (carts): This is – as is to be expected – the skill to guide a vehicle driven by one (or more than one) domesticated animal. Brahmin carts, horse carts, dog sleds, whatever.

Bonuses are possible for especially smart or docile animals or an easy road. Difficulties conversely for recalcitrant animals and a road filled with serpentes.

Driving (Engines): This is the skill to drive everything that has a built in means of locomotion – whether its engine is based on gas, batteries, methane or fusion.

Bonuses and difficulties for example based on the road and familiarity with one of those systems – or condition of the vehicle and “user friendliness” of the system.

Riding: Riding is the skill to paint pretty pictures, that capture the essence of the own self in contrast to the infinity of the emotional – hah! Got you! Riding is of course the skill to overpower a horse's will by sitting on it.

Bonuses and difficulties depending on the horse (please look to the section for animals for an explanation), on the equipment used (spurs or riding crop) and to a certain part on the skill *training*.

Training: Training is, as one can read in great detail in the rules regarding animals, the skill to train an animal. Since that depends heavily on the animal, please look for clear rules at whatever animal you wish to train.

Wilderness:

Survival: This is the skill to survive in the post-nuclear wasteland. This skill contains the knowledge on how to recognize drinkable water, how to erect a tent, which of the few, scraggy plants growing there are edible, how to find the correct way by using sun, moon and stars as reference, how to build a fire and all that.

Bonuses and difficulties depend on the action (after a rain fall, building a fire is more difficult than during a drought). Since this skill is complex, we leave it at one example.

Hunting traps: From simple loops to complicated explosives traps (one can, after all, hunt for super mutants, too), all this is governed by this skill. Depending on the skill level, one succeeds in mounting the most complex traps without anyone being able to spot them – up to and including the burying and hiding of mines and claymores. If one wishes to hide mines or claymores, one should remember, that arming them is not done by testing *Hunting traps* but by testing *Explosives*.

Bonuses and difficulties depend especially on the intelligence of the planned prey and the complexity of the trap.

Tracking: The skill to follow foot prints, to recognize them and to assign them to specific people or creatures or to draw conclusions from them (“A man, about 6 feet, 200 pounds...”).

Bonuses and difficulties best according to ground, wind and weather.

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

Bonuses and difficulties depending on the type of knot.

Climbing: The skill to go past walls, fences, cliffs and many other obstacles the hard way: over them.

Social skills:

Beguile/seduce: This is, as should be clear, that which rules how easy it is for a character to use their charm – with sexual undertones – to achieve something. Whether the wanted achievement is sexual in nature or not is not relevant.

Bonuses and difficulties are best solved by the gender/sexual preference of the character to be seduced.

Persuade/convince: Here we have the skill to get someone to do something, they'd rather not do, by using logic (or bribery) – or to rile up one or more persons. If you wish to hold a flaming speech, you test on this. Flaming speeches should be played out, too, however.

Bonuses and difficulties depend on the situation. Bribing a corrupt guard is generally easier than explaining to this guard, that it's of incredible importance, that your locked up comrade should be set free immediately.

Teaching/instruction: The skill to teach another person something that one self already knows how to do or to explain a complex set of circumstances in easy terms.

Bonuses and difficulties (especially interesting for the Master): Characters can only improve 1 or 2 skill points by getting lessons from another hero character. The teaching character must have the skill their teaching at least at 85 and a single lesson takes a week.

Trade/haggle: The exact rules governing *trade/haggle* can be found in the folder for Special Rules.

Social adaptation: This is the skill, to stay true to the example used for *Disguising*, that allows someone to blend into a crowd like Vault-City's inner city, by emulating the conduct of that group.

Disguising works as long as no one speaks to you. At which point this skill takes over.

But it's also applicable, when a character of poor circumstances gets invited to a banquet of the richest traders of the Hub.

Bonuses and difficulties are best applied by the time the character had, to study the group their infiltrating.

Games:

Gambling: That means games like Roulette, Crabs or similar, that are really dependent on random chance, are not governed by simple tests on *luck* in this P&P, but by the skill *gambling*. This skill decides whether or not one loses or wins. Since it would take a lifetime to come up with rules for every gambling game, we suggest bonuses and difficulties based on "difficulty" of the game. Same for the ratio of stake versus winnings.

Board games: Chess, nine men's morris, monopoly ... all these games and many more are comprised in this skill. Whenever a character plays a game with meeples on a board, this is what's tested. Bonuses and difficulties best based on publicity and difficulty of the game.

Card games: Card games like – especially, but not only – Poker are still very popular in the post-nuclear Wasteland. This is the skill that governs their play.

To remain with the example of Poker: those who can bluff or see through a bluff, have bonuses – those who can't, difficulties. Accordingly, good *empathy* would help.

Music: The skill to sing or play an instrument of choice. To play the fiddle one of course really needs a fiddle. Keep in mind that the choice of musical instruments is rather limited.

Bonuses and difficulties based on training time, circumstances and quality of the instrument.

Animation: The skill to perform smaller or larger tricks, be it to entertain or to distract. Such tricks include sleights of hand, juggling, small magic shows, etc.

Bonuses and difficulties for example can be based on the audience.

Bodily skills:

Acrobatics: Acrobatics is – as opposed to *athletics* – the skill to succeed in a **short** effort. For example to jump at a garage wall, to propel oneself with a nimble kick to the roof and then pull one self up all the way.

Bonuses and difficulties – to stay with the example – depend on whether or not one leaves the rucksack and the machine gun down on the floor or if one tries the jump with them on the person. Basically, if it's a fast, quick action and not a long effort, it's *acrobatics*.

Athletics: This skill is the one that is tested when it comes to **long-lasting** efforts, for example a race to see who can do the most push ups or a forced march.

Bonuses and difficulties are of course dependent on the manner of effort. Basically, if the action takes a lot of time, one tests for *athletics*.

Carousing: The skill to use without problem all kinds of drugs. This skill is not only used when using Jet, Buffout or similar stuff, but also to decide how well one tolerates alcohol. One of course does not have to test after each shot during an evening at the bar. One can just roll the dice at the end of the evening for a (maybe made more difficult) test on *carousing* to determine whether or not one wakes up with a hangover and whether or not it's a severe one.

Body control: *Body control* is the skill, that lies somewhere between *athletics* and *acrobatics*. If one wishes to rather see who can stay longer in the initial push up position, rather than seeing who can do the most push ups, it would be *body control* that's tested for. Even the question of whether or not one screams of pain after breaking a leg, despite enemies present close by, is one of *body control*.

Other skills.:

Cooking: The skill to – oh what a miracle – to make a meal out of raw materials (the indicted prefer calling those “ingredients”). The higher the skill, the tastier. The worse ... well, at least you know how to scorch water – not everyone can do that.

Sensual acuity: The skill to notice things that remain hidden to others. Is tested often, with pretty much everything that can be more or less hidden. Can also be used to notice details about people or to find hidden items.