

## Reflex System Quick Start Rules: System Basics

### Basic Task Resolution

All task checks are based on your character's *rating* in the appropriate skill and his *value* in the relevant attribute. Skill rating determines the number of dice you roll, while attribute value determines your base *target number* (TN). Roll the dice and take the *lowest* die result. If the result is equal to or less than your target number, you succeed. If it's greater than your target number, you fail.

From highest to lowest, the possible skill ratings are:

Master	5d20
Expert	4d20
Professional	3d20
Competent	2d20
Novice	1d20

**Example:** *Attacking with a rifle uses the Longarm skill and the Coordination attribute. If your character has Longarm Professional and Coordination 7, you roll 3d20 and take the lowest die result, hoping to roll under your TN of 7. If you roll 4, 12, and 19, the 4 indicates a success. The 12 and 19 have no effect.*

If your character has no rating in a skill, he's considered unskilled. You can still attempt certain actions, but at a significant penalty. Roll 2d20 and take the *highest* of the two die results.

### Attribute Checks

You may need to make a task check using a base attribute rather than a skill. This works the same way as a skill check, except that you always roll with a Competent skill rating (2d20).

### Bonuses and Penalties

Both beneficial and adverse effects can modify your base TN. Bonuses raise your TN, while penalties decrease it. No bonus or penalty can have an absolute value more than 5 (so bonuses range from +1 to +5, and penalties from -1 to -5).

### Success, Failure, and Margins Thereof

Sometimes, simple success or failure doesn't provide enough detail - you need to know how well you succeeded or how catastrophically you failed. In such instances, the relevant value is the difference between your TN and your die result. This is referred to as the *margin of success* (MoS) or *margin of failure* (MoF).

**Example:** *With a TN of 7 and a die result of 4, you succeed with a margin of success of 3.*

A MoS of zero (i.e. a die result equal to your TN) indicates that you barely succeeded, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

### Exceptional Success

If more than one die indicates a success, use the lowest result to determine your base MoS. Then increase your MoS by 2 for each additional successful die.

**Example:** *You roll 4d20 against a TN of 9, with die results of 5, 6, 11, and 20. Your MoS is 6: 4 for the die result of 5, +2 for the die that came up 6.*

### Opposed Checks

If two actions are in direct opposition to one another - for example, hiding in foliage (a Fieldcraft skill check) and trying to detect an ambush (an Awareness attribute check), the check with the greatest MoS (or lesser MoF) indicates the winner. If MoS is relevant to the outcome of the check, subtract the loser's MoS from the winner's to determine the actual MoS.

### Survival Points

Survival points (SPs) represent the natural resilience, reflexes, or dumb luck that keep player characters alive. Your character begins play with a number of SPs determined by his age (younger characters have more SPs to ensure that they survive their own stupidity long enough to continue the species). You may spend your SPs for the following benefits:

**Mitigate injury:** When your character receives a wound, spend one or more SPs to reduce its severity by one level per SP spent.

**Boost check:** Spend one or more SPs to add a +4 bonus per SP to any one skill check. You may spend SPs after you roll.

**Ignore wound penalties:** Spend one SP to negate all wound penalties for a single skill check.

**Aid Treatment:** As per Boost Check, but adding bonuses to someone else's attempt to perform a medical procedure on your character.

You earn SPs at the GM's discretion for performing acts of heroism, entertaining your fellow players, roleplaying your character well, or doing things that "look good on screen."

### Contacts

You begin play with a set of undefined contacts, which represents people you know who haven't yet been important to the story. To define and activate a contact, tell the GM that your character knows someone in the area and provide a general description of that person. Then make a COG check (a good description may give you a bonus). With success, you locate the contact in ((15 - MoS) hours. With failure, it takes you (1d6 + MoF) days.

Four basic types of contacts exist. *Information* contacts have useful data, *Reinforcement* contacts may be willing to fight alongside you, *Service* contacts have useful skills, and *Trade* contacts have stuff to sell you. Contacts also are rated on a scale of quality, ranging from Green through Regular, Experienced, Veteran, and Elite. Higher-quality contacts provide better benefits.

## Reflex System Quick Start Rules: Combat

### Combat Timing Basics

Combat is divided into *exchanges of fire* (brief flurries of action), each of which is divided into *ticks* (single instants within the firefight). A typical exchange of fire lasts 5 to 10 seconds, while a single tick is between ¼ and ½ second.

At the beginning of an exchange of fire, an *initiative check* establishes the speed with which your character acts. When your character's initiative value is the highest among all combatants, it's his turn to act. Each action has a *tick cost*, which represents the time required to perform it. When your character takes an action, resolve it, then subtract its tick cost from his initiative value.

**Example:** *Your character has an initiative value of 12. You select an action with a tick cost of 5. After the action is resolved, your character's initiative value drops to 7.*

When every combatant's initiative value is zero (or so low that no player has anything else to do), the exchange of fire ends and a new one begins.

### Initiative Checks

At the beginning of an exchange of fire, your character's base initiative value depends on how heavily-encumbered he is:

Overloaded	5
Heavily encumbered	7
Moderately encumbered	9
Lightly encumbered	12
Unencumbered	15

Your initiative check is an OODA attribute check. If you fail, your character receives only his base initiative for this exchange of fire. If you succeed, add *twice* the MoS to his base initiative (for a MoS of zero, add 1).

### Attacks

A character can use any weapon to make one of three basic attack types. Each weapon has a Speed rating, which provides the tick costs for these attacks in order. Each attack is a compromise between accuracy and speed.

**Blind Strike/Hip Shot:** Fast but wild. Suffers a penalty equal to the weapon's Bulk (minimum -2, even for Bulk 1 or 0 weapons).

**Snap Strike/Snap Shot:** Standard attack. No bonuses or penalties.

**Calculated Strike/Aimed Shot:** Slow but steady. Total penalties are halved.

### Burst Fire

Many military firearms are capable of burst fire, which fires multiple bullets with a single pull of the trigger. A burst-capable weapon has a "Bx" notation in its Rate of Fire trait, with "x" representing the number of rounds fired per burst.

When your character fires a burst, he receives a bonus equal to the number of additional rounds he's sending downrange (e.g. a 3-round burst provides a +2 bonus). If the attack hits, roll for hit location normally, then roll 1d6 for each additional bullet. A result of 1 indicates that the round strikes in the same hit location. A result of 2 or 3 indicates that the round strikes in a randomly-selected location. A result of 4 through 6 is a clean miss.

### Damage

Every weapon has a base Damage rating. The total damage inflicted by a successful attack equals this rating plus the attack's MoS. Roll for hit location, then compare the attack's damage to the target's wound thresholds. The target suffers a wound equal to the highest wound threshold that the attack's total damage equals or exceeds. If the target already has a wound of equal severity, his wound condition worsens by one level. If the target already has a wound of greater severity, the hit has no additional effect.

**The Rule of Zero Exception:** Regardless of the weapon's Damage rating, any attack with a zero MoS is a grazing hit and cannot inflict more than a slight wound.

**Example:** *You successfully attack with a MoS of 3, using a weapon whose base Damage is 6. Your attack's final damage value is 9. Your target has wound thresholds of Slight 1, Moderate 7, Serious 11, Critical 14. Your attack inflicts a moderate wound. If your target is already moderately wounded, his condition worsens to serious.*

### Armor and Penetration

Every weapon has a Penetration rating, which reflects its ability to punch through armor and cover. If an attack strikes an intervening object, multiply the Armor value by the weapon's Penetration, then subtract it from the attack's damage before determining wounds.

**Example:** *Your attack strikes your target's body armor, which has Armor 2. Your weapon has Penetration x2. This generates an effective Armor 4, which is subtracted from your damage of 9 to yield a final damage value of 5.*

## Wound Effects

Wounds are the only effect which subtract dice from skill checks rather than penalizing TNs. Wound penalties are not cumulative - if multiple wounds affect an action, only the most severe penalty applies. If a wound penalty reduces you to zero dice, make an unskilled check (2d20, take the *higher* die result).

Attribute checks are not affected by wounds.

### **Common Wound Effects**

Whenever your character suffers a moderate or serious wound to any location, make a Fitness check. If you fail, your character enters shock; a CUF check is required to act on all subsequent exchanges of fire. If you fail by 5 or more, your character is unstable and will bleed out in a matter of minutes unless he receives first aid.

### **Head Wounds**

**Slight:** -1 die to all actions.

**Moderate:** -2 dice to all actions.

**Serious:** -3 dice to all actions. If MoF on fitness check is 5 or more, character falls unconscious.

**Critical:** Character automatically becomes unstable and unconscious.

### **Torso Wounds**

**Slight:** -1 die to all physical actions.

**Moderate:** -2 dice to all physical actions.

**Serious:** -3 dice to all physical actions.

**Critical:** -4 dice to all physical actions.

### **Arm Wounds**

**Slight:** -1 die to all actions with that limb.

**Moderate:** -2 dice to all actions with that limb. Make a Muscle check to avoid dropping anything held in that hand.

**Serious:** -3 dice to all actions with that limb. Make a Muscle check (TN -2) to avoid dropping anything held in that hand.

**Critical:** Limb unusable. Drop anything held in that hand.

### **Leg Wounds**

**Slight:** -1 die to all actions with that limb. Character can't sprint.

**Moderate:** -2 dice to all actions with that limb. Character can't move faster than a walk.

**Serious:** -3 dice to all actions with that limb. Character can't move faster than a stagger.

**Critical:** Limb unusable. Character falls down and can only crawl.

## Movement

Movement in combat is a 5-tick action. The distance your character covers depends on his movement speed, which is limited by any leg injuries (see above) and his current encumbrance.

While moving, your character may also take any one other action with a tick cost of 5 or less. Movement imposes penalties on most physical actions, but it may also make your character harder for attackers to hit.

<u>Speed</u>	<u>Encumbrance</u>	<u>Penalty</u>	<u>To Hit You</u>
Sprint	Unencumbered	-5	-3
Run	Light or none	-3	-2
Trot	Moderate or less	-2	-1
Walk	Heavy or less	-1	None
Stagger	Any	-1	None
Crawl	Any	-4	Prone

## Other Actions

<u>Action</u>	<u>Tick cost</u>
Activate/deactivate equipment	1
Assess situation (look around)	1 to 6
Block in close combat	1 + weapon Speed
Change stance down	2
Change stance up	4
Communicate	1, 3, or 5
Ditch clothing/pack	all remaining
Ready item	item Bulk
Reload weapon	weapon Bulk
Stow item	item Bulk
Wait	see following

## Waiting to Act

Your character's OODA represents his reaction speed. Accordingly, waiting for something to happen is an action whose speed depends on OODA. Characters with higher OODA can pause, assess, decide on a new action, and act with greater speed. The Wait action represents this, and its tick cost depends on the character's OODA:

<u>OODA</u>	<u>Wait tick cost</u>
15	1
13-14	2
10-12	3
7-9	4
4-6	5
1-3	6

## Stances

**Standing:** Default stance; no modifiers.

**Kneeling:** -1 to ranged attacks against you; +1 to close combat attacks against you; can only walk or stagger; double movement penalties to your actions; +1 MUS for recoil resistance.

**Sitting:** No movement; +2 MUS for recoil resistance.

**Prone:** All ranged attacks and observation against you occur at one range band farther than actual; +2 to close combat attacks against you; can only crawl; your ranged attacks to your sides and rear take twice as long; x2 MUS for recoil resistance.

## **The Cast**

**Lieutenant Commander Dillon King**, Royal Australian Navy (Fleet Air Arm), wasn't even supposed to be in this war. The helicopter pilot had the misfortune to be serving as an exchange officer on board *HMS Montrose* when the Twilight War erupted, and England suddenly had other priorities than repatriating an allied aviator whose services the Royal Navy needed anyway. King's Merlin went down on the Baltic coast in February, leaving him stranded. He linked up with EU ground forces, where he's been a reluctant infantryman ever since.

Dillon is 1.9 meters tall, in his late thirties, and healthily tanned despite the long, gloomy Balkan winter. He's usually attired in a hodgepodge of secondhand camouflage fatigues and, if expecting combat, his flight helmet and an assault rifle. As befits an aviator, his mustache is perfect.

**Stabsunteroffizier (Sergeant) Roswitha Kuhlberg's** unladylike fascination with construction and destruction led her into a combat engineering career in the German Army, only a couple of years after the specialty was opened to women. Until the nuclear strike on her base in Malbork, she was a *pionierpanzer* commander. Now she's happy to have a good shovel.

Roswitha is a tall, athletic twentysomething blonde who never quite seems to get the dirt and grease out of her well-worn *Bundeswehr* camouflage. Although most of her prewar experience was in civil engineering - road, bridge, and building construction - the past year has put the "combat" back in her combat engineering job. Her primary weapon is whatever large armored vehicle is available - or, failing that, an assault rifle and grenade launcher.

**Corporal Lee Watkins** had the dubious fortune of being on the last flight out of Malbork before the nukes hit. Unfortunately, his destination was even worse. He and the rest of II Squadron of the RAF Regiment dropped on Siauliai, attempting to retake the Lithuanian airport before the Russians could consolidate their hold on it. The squadron held up its end of the operation, but EU follow-on support never materialized. After the bloody breakout into the Lithuanian countryside, Lee spent a couple of months on his own before linking up with the rest of the team.

Lee's a working-class Brit of average height and (for 2013) average build, a man for whom the RAF was the best possible option for getting out of his old neighborhood. The euphemism that best applies to him is "good with his hands," whether the game is fisticuffs or his preferred light machine gun.

**Casimir Rakowski** was born in rural Poland in 1956, when the hand of Communism rested heavily upon the country. His father and grandfather had both been anti-Soviet partisans in World War II, and Casimir was raised on two generations' worth of hatred for the Russians. As soon as he was old enough, he was inducted into the family business: a loose coalition of poachers, smugglers, bootleggers, and occasional local assets for the NATO espionage community. The collapse of

Communism in 1990 did little to affect Casimir's work, aside from making border crossings easier and bringing in occasional legitimate money as a hunting guide for rich Westerners. The Twilight War, on the other hand, was a serious obstacle to his daily routine. Although he was too old to volunteer for military service, Casimir's eyes were as good as ever, and a lifetime of hunting was more than enough to overcome the first twinges of arthritis. He linked up with a Polish infantry division whose commander was smart enough to see his value as a scout, and for the past year he's been back in the other family business: stalking and killing Russians.

Casimir is a squat, thick Slav, standing only 1.6 meters tall. With his graying beard, scarred and weathered face, and work-gnarled hands, he can fit into virtually any survivor community in the region without arousing so much as a second glance. He carries his old hunting shotgun, a Russian sniper rifle whose previous owner no longer needs it, and a fine collection of cutlery.

**Jurgen Presser** is a German freelance photojournalist with a history of sticking his lens in humanitarian crises. The good news is that he doesn't have to look very far for material now. The bad news is that he's just as deep in the shit as everyone else. Jurgen has a decent amount of rescue training and is a lifelong adrenaline junkie (rock climbing, SCUBA, and skydiving). He's staying with the rest of the group for protection, as the only embedding a lone reporter's likely to do these days is in fresh-turned earth.

No matter how bad things get, Jurgen somehow manages to look at least somewhat clean. He usually looks at least a decade younger than his actual age of 34. Although he's seen as much of the war as anyone else, Jurgen is as much of a moral compass as the group has. He does know how to use a rifle - barely - but if a fight breaks out, he's more likely to have a camera or his aid bag in his hands.

**Michael Kemp** was an infantry platoon leader in the Blues and Royals regiment of the British Army until a training accident ended his military career. After an extended convalescence, he used his regimental connections to secure a job in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, working for the military attache of the British embassy in Warsaw. He's a bit vague on how he wound up so close to the front lines during the latter months of the war, mumbling something about fact-finding missions and ministers without portfolios.

Michael is as close to average-looking as it's possible to get without a computer model. With a change of clothes and accent, he'd look like a native anywhere from his native Southampton to the Mediterranean basin. Although he carries a chopped-down assault rifle for the sake of appearances, he's much better up close and personal with a pistol.