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# dREAL

An OGL ruleset for non-heroic roleplaying

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

dREAL is a set of rules for roleplaying games about relatively normal people in a world that works like reality. This ruleset is not designed to support roleplaying heroic characters with larger-than-life attributes and an ability to triumph against impossible odds, nor to simulate the narrative immunity of main characters in TV shows and comic books.

dREAL tries to simulate, more or less, what life is like in the real world.

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### Rules Engine

dREAL uses the same rules engine as the world's most popular role-playing game.

At the core of dREAL is a single rules mechanic. To determine success or failure in a situation of uncertainty, the player (or GM) rolls a d20, adds or subtracts any appropriate modifiers, and compares the total to a target number. If the total equals or exceeds the target number, the attempt succeeds; otherwise, the attempt is a failure.

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## 2. CHARACTERS

dREAL characters consist of the following elements.

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### Ability Scores

Characters have scores ranging from 3 to 18 in the abilities Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma. A modifier ranging from -4 to +4 is derived from this score and applied to all relevant dice rolls in the game.

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### Skills

Characters have ranks ranging from 0 upwards in a large number of skills. The ranks are applied as a positive modifier to all skill rolls.

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### Hit Points

A number that indicates the physical well-being of the character. When a character is healthy and unhurt, this score is at its maximum. Injuries to the character are reflected in a reduction of this score, and healing/recuperation is represented by the restoration of the score to its full amount. A character's total hit point score is 8 modified by the character's Constitution modifier, giving a range of 4 to 12 hit points.

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### 3. ABILITIES

All abilities are ranked with a score ranging from 1 upwards. Normal human scores fall within the bell-curve range of 3–18, centred on 10 and 11. Larger or smaller scores are possible (in animals, for example). All scores correspond to die roll modifiers, as follows (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Ability Modifiers**

Ability Score	Modifier
1	–5
2–3	–4
4–5	–3
6–7	–2
8–9	–1
10–11	0
12–13	+1
14–15	+2
16–17	+3
18–19	+4
20–21	+5
etc.	etc.

The individual abilities, and the rolls to which modifiers apply, are described below.

#### Strength

This ability measures a character's muscle and physical power. The Strength modifier is applied to:

- *skill rolls for skills that have Strength as a key ability*
- *in a fight, damage rolls (except for non-thrown ranged weapons)*
- *simple Strength checks, for feats of strength alone*
- *Power saves*

#### Dexterity

This ability measures hand-eye co-ordination, agility, reflexes, and balance.

The Dexterity modifier is applied to:

- *skill rolls for skills that have Dexterity as a key ability*
- *in combat, all attack rolls and defense rolls*
- *simple Dexterity checks, for feats of dexterity alone*
- *Reflex saves*

#### Constitution

This ability represents a character's health and stamina.

The Constitution modifier is applied to:

- *skill rolls for skills that have Constitution as a key ability*
- *the base hit point total of 8*
- *simple Constitution checks, for feats of constitution alone*
- *Fortitude saves*

#### Intelligence

This ability represents how well a character learns and reasons.

The Intelligence modifier is applied to:

- *skill rolls for skills that have Intelligence as a key ability*
- *skill increase rolls*
- *simple intelligence checks, for feats of intelligence alone*
- *Idea saves*

#### Wisdom

This ability describes a character's willpower, common sense, perception and intuition.

The Wisdom modifier is applied to:

- *skill rolls for skills that have Wisdom as a key ability*
- *simple Wisdom checks, for feats of wisdom alone*
- *Will saves*

#### Charisma

This ability measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, ability to lead, and physical attractiveness.

The Charisma modifier is applied to:

- *skill rolls for skills that have Charisma as a key ability*
- *attempts to influence others*
- *simple charisma checks, for feats of charisma alone*
- *Grace saves*

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## Using Abilities: Simple Ability Checks

Sometimes a roll is needed to determine whether a character can successfully complete a task based solely on natural ability. This is a simple ability check.

When making a simple ability check, the player rolls d20 and applies the modifier for the relevant ability score. This total is compared against the Difficulty Class (DC) of the task, or against the opposing character's roll if it is an opposed check. If it equals or exceeds the DC, or exceeds the opposing character's roll, the character is successful.

In some cases, a test of one's ability doesn't involve luck. When two characters arm wrestle, for example, the stronger character simply wins. In the case of identical scores, make opposed Strength checks.

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**Table 3.2 Example Ability Checks**

Task	Key Ability
Forcing open a jammed or locked door	Strength
Tying a rope	Dexterity
Holding one's breath	Constitution
Navigating a maze	Intelligence
Recognize someone you've seen before	Wisdom
Getting yourself noticed in a crowd	Charisma

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## Lucky Escapes: Saves

Sometimes characters find themselves in circumstances where natural reactions and instinct are all that lies between them and some unpleasant effect. In these circumstances, a save is called for. If the save is successful, the effect is reduced or avoided; if the save is unsuccessful, the character bears the full brunt of the effect.

Saves are a special type of Ability Check that is used when a character is forced to react to circumstance without forethought or planning. There are six types of Save, one for each ability:

**Power save:** simple Strength checks, for avoiding effects that can be resisted by holding on or pushing back.

**Reflex save:** simple Dexterity checks, for avoiding effects that can be escaped by moving quickly and appropriately.

**Fortitude save:** simple Constitution checks, for avoiding effects that can be resisted by physical endurance.

**Insight save:** simple Intelligence checks, for avoiding effects that can be resisted by working something out or having a bright idea.

**Will save:** simple Wisdom checks, for avoiding effects that can be resisted by strength of will.

**Grace save:** simple Charisma checks, for avoiding effects that can be resisted by savoir faire and style.

The difficulty and effectiveness of a save vary by the specific circumstances. Note that saves rely, as stated, on natural reactions and instinct—there are no skills for saves, and characters cannot Take 10 or 20 (see page 4).

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**Table 3.3: Saves—Example DCs**

Purpose of Save	Type of Save	DC
Hold on after a climbing slip	Power (Str)	10
Stay standing when overloaded	Power (Str)	15
Avoid a runaway shopping cart	Reflex (Dex)	10
Avoid a speeding car	Reflex (Dex)	15
Avoid crying when injured	Fortitude (Con)	3 + hp damage
Hold scalding metal (1 round)	Fortitude (Con)	15
Realise the man is a junkie	Insight (Int)	12
Remember a name from before	Insight (Int)	15
Avoid crying when scared	Will (Wis)	6
Resist police mind-games	Will (Wis)	18
Laugh off an insult	Grace (Cha)	10
Mother-in-law walks in on you	Grace (Cha)	15

## 4. SKILLS

**dREAL** characters can have any of a wide range of skills. Each is tied to a specific ability.

A list of skills can be found in Table 4.4.

### Skill Ranks

Characters have ranks in their skills ranging from 1 upwards. (Characters have a rank of 0 in all skills which they do not possess.) The rank and the ability modifier are added together to modify all skill rolls.

The higher the skill rank, the more skilled the character, as follows in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Meaning of Skill Ranks**

Skill Ranks	Description
0	No skill at all
1–2	Absolute novice
3–5	Amateur
6–10	Professional
11–16	Expert
17+	Master

### Skill Checks

When a character makes use of a skill, a d20 is rolled to determine the success of the skill use. This takes into account training and experience (skill rank), natural talent (ability modifier) and luck (the roll itself).

When making a skill check, the player rolls d20, applies the modifier for the relevant ability score and adds the number of ranks in the skill. This total is compared against the Difficulty Class (DC) of the task. If it equals or exceeds the DC, the character is successful.

The DC is set by the GM according to the nature of the task. The higher the DC, the more difficult the task, as in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Task Difficulties**

Difficulty	Class Description
05	<b>Easy</b> —Virtually no-one will have trouble
10	<b>Average</b> —Simple even for the unskilled
15	<b>Tough</b> —Hard for the unskilled, but amateurs can manage
20	<b>Challenging</b> —Simple for a professional, hard for an amateur
25	<b>Formidable</b> —Hard for professionals, expertise is desirable
30	<b>Overwhelming</b> —Hard even for an expert
35	<b>Extreme</b> —Hard even for a master of this skill
40	<b>Nearly Impossible</b> —Even a master will rarely succeed at this task

### Opposed Checks

Some skill checks are made against another character's skill. In this case, skill checks are made for both characters and the results compared. Whoever gets the higher result wins the contest. Ties are resolved by rerolling until there is a winner.

**Table 4.3: Example Opposed Checks**

Task	Skill	Opposing Skill
Sneak up on someone	Move Silently	Listen
Con someone	Bluff	Sense Motive
Hide from someone	Hide	Spot
Win a car race	Drive	Drive
Pretend to be someone else	Disguise	Spot
Steal a key chain	Sleight of Hand	Spot

### Taking 10

On simple ability checks and skill checks, when a character is not being rushed, distracted or threatened, they may choose to Take 10.

The player rolls the d20 as normal, but any result below 10 is treated as if it were a 10. (Alternatively, the player can just accept 10 as the result without rolling.)

Distractions and threats make it impossible for a character to Take 10. A character also can't Take 10 when using a skill untrained, though the GM may allow exceptions for truly routine activities.

### Taking 20

It is possible to Take 20 on skill checks. When a character has plenty of time, is faced with no threats or distractions, and when there are no penalties for failing (or when the character is willing to suffer the penalties for failing), they may choose to Take 20.

Taking 20 is the equivalent of attempting the check over and over again until the character gets it right. This means the character does not roll d20 but calculates the check result as if a 1 was rolled, and then the task was retried and a 2 was rolled, and then the task was retried and a 3 was rolled, and this pattern continued until the task was successfully completed or the task was calculated as if a 20 was rolled but still without success.

### Circumstance Modifiers

Some situations may make a skill easier or harder to use. To account for this, the GM may apply a modifier to a skill check or DC. Usually circumstance modifiers should be +2 or -2.

Modifiers to the skill check represent conditions making the character's performance better or worse, while modifiers to the DC represent conditions making the required level of performance higher or lower. (Usually the distinction doesn't matter, but sometimes it is important.)

### Aiding Another Character

Sometimes one character will be able to help another in using a skill, or several characters will work together on the same task. In this case, one character (usually the one with the highest skill) is treated as the leader and makes a skill check as normal. The other characters must make skill rolls against DC10 (no

Take 10 or Take 20 allowed). For each helper who succeeds, the leader gains a +2 circumstance bonus.

Note that, in many cases, a character's help won't be beneficial, or only a limited number of characters can help at the same time. The GM limits aid another attempts as he or she sees fit for the conditions.

## Trying Again

If a character fails on a skill check, he or she can sometimes try again. Many skills, however, have natural consequences for failing that must be accounted for. Some skills can't be tried again once a check has failed for a particular task.

If the use of a skill carries no penalty for failure, a character can Take 20 and assume that he or she keeps trying until he or she eventually succeeds.

## Untrained Skill Checks

If a character attempts to use a skill he or she doesn't have any ranks in, the character makes a skill check as normal. The character's skill modifier don't include skill ranks because the character doesn't have any. The character does get other modifiers, though, such as the ability modifier for the skill's key ability.

## Skills Available

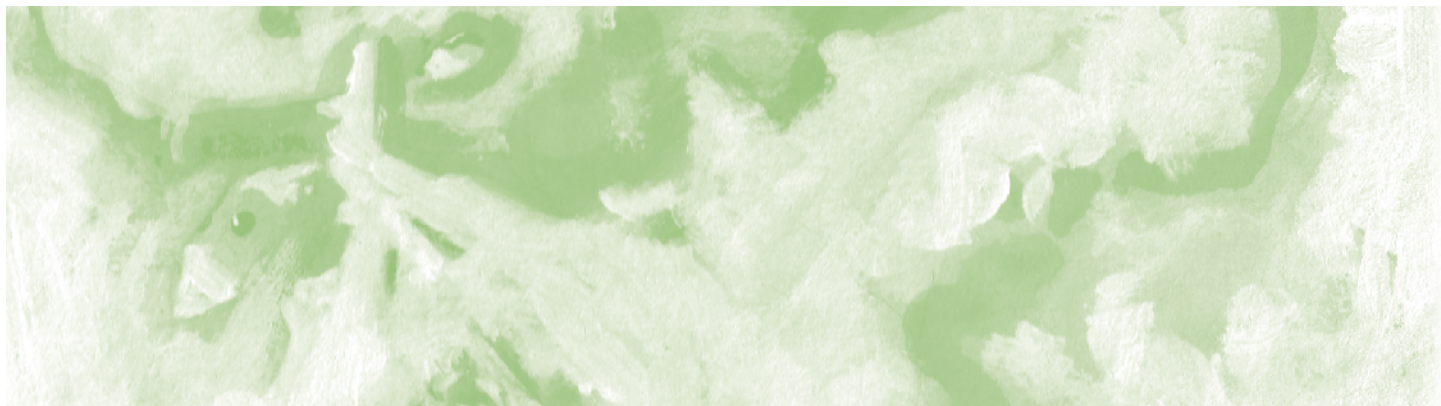
There are a wide range of skills. Each is tied to a specific ability. Following is a list of skills along with the ability related to the skill and a note illustrating the use of the skill (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Skill List**

Skill	Ability	Notes
Balance	Dex	Good for narrow ledges and skateboards
Bluff	Cha	Good for pretending to be sincere
Charm	Cha	Good for winning people over
Climb	Str	Good for clambering over walls
Computer Use	Int	Good for performing any computer tasks
Concentration	Con	Good for staying focussed
Craft		
—Chemical	Int	Good for whipping up a mixture
—Cooking	Int	Good for whipping up a feast
—Electronic	Int	Good for makeshifting circuits
—Mechanical	Int	Good for figuring out a car engine
—Structural	Int	Good for building a shed
—Visual Arts	Int	Good for making a sketch
—Writing	Int	Good for writing an article
Demolitions	Int	Good for safely blowing stuff up
Diplomacy	Cha	Good for working towards agreement
Drive	Dex	Good for screeching around corners
Escape Artist	Dex	Good for wriggling free
Forgery	Int	Good for getting drinks underage
Gamble	Wis	Good for breaking even in Vegas

Skill (cont.)	Ability	Notes
Gather Information	Cha	Good for getting the gossip
Handle Animal	Cha	Good for teaching Rover tricks
Hand to Hand	Dex	Good for smashing people around
Hide	Dex	Good for avoiding the cops
Intimidate	Cha	Good for making squealers squeal
Investigate	Int	Good for evaluating a crime scene
Jump	Str	Good for leaping over a pond
Knowledge	Int	Good for trivia night
Lead	Cha	Good for getting people around you to work
Listen	Wis	Good for hearing whispers
Melee	Dex	Good for wielding weapons
Move Silently	Dex	Good for creeping past the cops
Navigate	Int	Good for figuring out the right way
Perform	Cha	Good for showing off on stage
Pilot	Dex	Good for coming in to land
Profession	Wis	Good for earning a living
Ranged Combat	Dex	Good for snapping off shots from a distance
Research	Int	Good for exploring what everyone else thinks
Ride	Dex	Good for galloping over hill and dale
Search	Int	Good for leaving no stone unturned
Sense Motive	Wis	Good for picking up something fishy
Sleight of Hand	Dex	Good for poker and stage magic
Speak Language	Cha	Good for foreign countries
Spot	Wis	Good for taking it all in
Survival	Wis	Good for knowing what won't kill you
Swim	Str	Good for not drowning
Taunt	Cha	Good for getting folk riled
Teach	Cha	Good for passing on knowledge
Treat Injury	Int	Good for bandaging up a wound
Tumble	Dex	Good for rolling with falls





## 5. HEALTH AND INJURY

### Hit Points

Hit points represent how much physical injury a character can withstand before falling unconscious or dying. A character's hit point total when healthy and unharmed is 8 plus or minus their Constitution modifier (−4 to +4 usually).

### Damage

In dREAL, when a character is injured, the injury is abstracted into a numerical amount of damage. The kind of injury determines the exact amount. Some examples are shown below (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1: Examples of Damage**

Type of Injury	Damage
Bare-knuckle punched	1d3 Subdual
Knifed	1d4 Lethal
Hit by thrown garbage can	1d6 Subdual
Fall 10 feet on to hard surface	1d6 Lethal
Shot from a rifle	2d8 Lethal
Caught in a burst of flame	3d6 Lethal

### Subdual Damage

Subdual damage, such as that delivered in any fistfight, accumulates as an increasing total. If the total rises above the character's current hit point total, the character falls unconscious.

### Falling Unconscious

If the character's subdual damage exceeds their current hit points, that character falls unconscious. At the end of each minute of unconsciousness, the character has a 10% chance of waking up.

### Lethal Damage

Points of lethal damage are subtracted from the total when inflicted, representing the accumulation of injury. If the total falls below 0, the character begins to die.

### Dying

If the character falls into negative hit points, that character is dying. The character immediately falls unconscious. At the end of each round, the character has a 10% chance of stabiliz-

ing and losing no more hit points; if the character does not stabilize, another hit point is lost.

### Dead

If the character's hit points drop to −10, the character is dead.

### Protective Equipment

Damage from piercing, bludgeoning or slashing weapons will be reduced if the target is wearing protective equipment. The type of protective equipment determines the exact amount. If damage is reduced below 0, it is treated as 0.

**Table 5.2: Examples of Damage Reduction**

Type of Protective Equipment	Damage Reduction
Leather Jacket	1d2
Chainmail Shirt	1d8+1
Bulletproof Vest	2d6

### Recovering From Damage

Subdual damage heals at the rate of 1 point per hour.

Lethal damage heals at the rate of 1 point per day of rest.

Complete bed rest restores 2 points of lethal damage per day.



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## 6. PERILOUS SITUATIONS

In situations where characters are in danger, or where they are opposed, or in any situation where the changing moment-by-moment situation is important, rounds and initiative can be used to manage exactly who acts when.

A fight is a perfect example of a perilous situation. Some more detailed rules for resolving fights and battles are given below.

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### Managing Time: Rounds

Time is divided up into rounds. Each round represents 6 seconds of time in the game, and in each round a character has an opportunity to perform a simple action and to move a short distance.

Note that not all actions can be performed in a single round. Some complex actions will take many rounds to complete. The GM determines how many rounds a given action will take.

When it is a character's action in the round, the player announces the character's action and, if it is a simple action, resolves the action. Then the next character has an opportunity to act.

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### Who Acts When: Initiative

The order of acting within a round is determined by initiative. Each character involved in the situation makes an initiative check, which is a simple Dexterity check. Characters then act in order of their results, highest to lowest.

Once the last character has acted, the round ends and the next round immediately begins with the first character once again. Each round uses the same initiative order.

It is possible to wait and act later in the initiative order. A character who chooses to wait may decide to delay their action to any point in the initiative order that follows. At any time following the character may decide to take their action. This point becomes the character's new position in the initiative order. (Note that if the character's original position is reached, then the action is lost.)

The character may, if they choose, use their turn to ready an action for specific circumstances—for example, to close a door once someone has gone through it. As soon as the circumstances are met the action takes place. Again, this point becomes the character's new position in the initiative order.

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### Fights and Battles

Any character can use an action to attack another character. The relevant skills are Hand to Hand (for unarmed attack actions), Melee (for armed attack actions) and Ranged Combat (for attacks made from a distance). Details for each are given below.

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#### Hand to Hand Attacks

Hand to hand is used when a character tries to hurt or subdue another character with bare hands.

A character can attack any character within reach. This is an opposed check. The target opposes with a Hand to Hand check, unless armed with a Melee Weapon, in which case the target opposes with a Melee check.

If the unarmed attack check is successful, the target receives 1d3 points of subdual damage, modified by the attacker's Strength modifier.

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#### Melee Attacks

Melee is used when a character tries to hurt or subdue another character with a melee weapon.

A character armed with a melee weapon can attack any other character in range (usually they must be adjacent, but some weapons have a long reach). The target opposes with a Hand to Hand check, unless armed with a Melee Weapon, in which case the target opposes with a Melee check.

If the attack roll is successful, the target receives an amount of damage determined by the type of weapon used, modified by the attacking character's Strength modifier.

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#### Ranged Attacks

Ranged Combat is used when a character tries to hit another character with a ranged weapon.

A character can use a ranged weapon to attack any other character in range and in line of sight. The DC is 15, modified as follows.

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Target Situation	DC Modifier
Unaware of the attack	-5
Aware of the attack	Target's Dex modifier
In cover	+4

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If the attack roll is successful, the target receives an amount of damage determined by the type of weapon used.

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## Grapple Attacks

Characters also have the option of trying to pin an opponent. A Grab-and-Grapple attempt is actually two separate checks made in the same action. Choose one opponent who is within reach and follow these steps:

***Grab Check:** The character makes a Hand to Hand Attack check as described above. If successful, instead of dealing damage the character moves on to make a Grapple check as part of the same action. If unsuccessful, the grapple action ends.*

***Grapple Check:** Once a character has grabbed an opponent, an opposed Hand to Hand check is immediately made in order to start grappling. This check uses Strength as a key ability instead of Dexterity. If successful, the character and target are considered to be grappling and the character may as a free action immediately inflict his standard unarmed damage on the target. The grapple action ends.*

While grappling, a character may not move, and is treated as if their Dexterity modifier is -5 for purposes of opposing Hand to Hand or Melee attack rolls (excluding Grapple checks) and as a modifier to the DC of a Ranged Combat attack.

Once characters are grappling, either can attempt a Hold Check on their action:

***Hold Check:** A grappling character makes an opposed Grapple check against a grappling opponent. This check uses Strength as a key ability instead of Dexterity. If successful, the character may choose any of the following effects:*

- **Inflict Damage:** The character inflicts standard unarmed damage on the target
- **Pin:** The character pins the target for 1 round. A pinned opponent may not move or act except to attempt to break the pin.
- **Break a Pin:** A pinned character breaks free of the target's pin or frees the target character from a pin (although the grapple continues).
- **Escape:** The character slips out of the grapple and may move away immediately

A pinned character is held immobile in a grapple. The character takes a -4 penalty to Defense against melee attacks and loses his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense.



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## 7. CHARACTER CREATION

**dREAL** is designed to support an enormous variety of types of game. There is no expected form of play as there is in genre-based games, where players expect to be fantasy heroes or hard-as-nails gunslingers. For this reason, it is crucial that characters in **dREAL** are created collaboratively, with the GM heavily involved in the process to ensure appropriateness for the planned game.

If the game is to be set on a science station in Antarctica, then generating Marine Corps soldiers or drop-out guitarists isn't going to be helpful.

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### Winging It

One method of character creation is to simply assign numbers that seem right to the character's abilities and skills. As long as the GM and player are in accord, characters created in this manner are entirely legitimate. It is wise, however, to ensure that the accord spreads across the entire group. Some players may tend towards less capable characters while others tend towards more capable characters. It is up to the GM to ensure that every player has a character who will be able to provide a rich and enjoyable play experience.

**Niche Protection:** One tool to ensure that differently-able characters share the spotlight of game time, rather than have it unequally divided, is to ensure that different characters fulfill different niches in the group of characters. In this way, every character will have some area in which they can shine.

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### Point-Based Character Building

A more traditional method for creating characters is to spend points on attributes and skills.

Characters have two pools of points, the Ability Pool and the Skill Pool. The size of these pools is determined by the GM based on the kind of game desired. Example sizes for these pools are given in the Table 7.1. (Also listed is the Skill Cap, which is discussed below.)

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**Table 7.1: Character Balancing Point Pools**

Characters Are To Be	Ability Pool	Skill Pool	Skill Cap
Life's losers	9	15	8
Utterly ordinary	15	20	10
A cut above the norm	20	30	13
Elite and capable	25	40	16
Exceptional	30	50	18
Incredibly Able	35	60	20

**Ability Pool:** The Ability Pool (which could be called the 'nature pool') is for ability scores and qualities. These points are spent to buy scores for the six abilities, according to their cost in Table 7.2. Note that scores lower than 8 actually add to the point pool.

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**Table 7.2: Ability Score Point Cost**

Score	Cost	Score	Cost
3	(+5)	11	3
4	(+4)	12	4
5	(+3)	13	5
6	(+2)	14	6
7	(+1)	15	8
8	0	16	10
9	1	17	13
10	2	18	16

**Skill Pool:** The Skill Pool (which could be called the 'nurture pool') is for Skills. Points from the Skill Pool can be spent to buy ranks in any skill allowed by the GM. The cost is simply 1 point per rank.

**Skill Cap:** The Skill Cap gives the highest skill rank that can be bought with Skill Points. Skills cannot be bought above this cap without express GM permission.

**Hit Points:** The character's hit points are equal to 8 modified by the character's Constitution modifier.

**Finishing Touches:** At this stage, other non-mechanical aspects of the character can be determined. This includes age, height, weight, gender, occupation and possessions.

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## 8. CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Characters can improve their skills by increasing their skill ranks. Skills have a chance of increase after special training or a successful use of a skill for a difficult task.

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### Earning Increase Chances

Characters earn chances to increase their skills whenever they succeed at a challenging task or devote themselves to training and practice. An increase chance is checked with a simple ability roll, and if this roll is successful, the character's skill rank increases by one. Increase chances are earned whenever either of the following criteria is met (tuition or practical experience).

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#### Tuition

If a character is able to train in a skill, at the end of a training period an increase chance may be awarded. Training requires a teacher, who can be anyone willing to train the character who has more ranks in the skill being trained than the character does.

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#### Length of Training Period

The training period is equal to current skill rank in days. These are days in which some significant effort is put into training. In the course of the day only an hour of time may be spent with a teacher, or as much as the full 24 hours, at the discretion of the teacher (and the GM). If a character is thoroughly distracted (in the judgement of the GM) on a given day, that day may be lost as a training day.

For example, a character with 6 ranks in Balance may earn an increase chance after 6 days spent training.

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#### Teach Skill Check

The teacher must make a Teach skill check against 10 + the character's current rank in the skill being trained. If successful, the teacher has successfully communicated useful information to the character. If the teacher fails, the training fails and the character does not earn an increase chance for that training period.

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#### Application Save

If the teacher has made a successful Teach skill check, the character must successfully make a DC 10 Will saving throw. This roll reflects the effort and attention paid by the character to the training offered. If this roll fails, the character loses the increase chance for that training period and must begin again. If this roll succeeds, however, the character is awarded with an increase chance.

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### Practical Experience

For every month of game time, the character can choose three skills that the character has regularly used or practiced in the previous month. Each of these skills may earn an increase chance.

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#### Insight Save

In order for an increase chance to be earned, the character must achieve some insight about the activities he or she has undertaken. For each skill chosen, the character must successfully make a DC 10 Insight saving throw. If this roll fails, the character loses the increase chance for that training period. If this roll succeeds, however, the character is awarded with an increase chance.

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### Success at a Very Challenging Task

If a skill is used to successfully complete a task with a DC at least 20 higher than the character's skill ranks, an increase chance is earned.

A character who succeeds at the task through use of Take 20 still earns the increase chance. The main limiting factor is the task itself—it is rare for a character to be faced with such a challenging task.

An increase chance is not earned if Aid Another is used, however. The character must succeed on his or her own merits.

No additional check is needed for an increase chance earned this way. The character earns the increase chance upon completing the task.

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### Resolving Increase Chances

When an increase chance has been earned, the character can make a Learning Check to see if their skill will increase.

This chance will be checked when the GM deems it appropriate. Usually this will be during some kind of 'down time' when the character is not involved in major activity, but the GMs discretion may allow this.

To make a Learning Check, the character makes a simple Intelligence roll against a DC of 10 + (half the character's current skill rank, rounding up).

If the roll is successful, the character's rank in the skill increases by 1.



## 9. GM CHARACTERS

In terms of most **dREAL** rules, characters are identical whether they are run by the players or by the GM. GM characters have the same range of ability scores and skills as player characters.

However, GM characters are dealt with slightly differently when it comes to attitude and nerve. Player characters are entirely under the control of the player; whether their attitude towards another character improves or worsens is entirely up to the player, as is whether they stand firm in the face of trouble or flee.

GM characters, on the other hand, are usually subject to the rules system when it comes to interacting with other characters and dealing with intimidating situations. (The GM may of course overrule any of this at any time, effectively deciding to treat a GM character in the same way as a player character; nevertheless, this is assumed to be the exception, not the norm.)

### Attitude

All GM characters have an Attitude towards all other characters. Usually, but not always, this attitude is Indifferent. The GM can set attitudes as appropriate given the situation in the game. See Table 9.1.

### Influencing GM Character Attitude

The skills Charm and Diplomacy can both be used to influence a GM character's attitude. Difficulty classes for these attempts are given in Table 9.2.

**Table 9.1 GM Character Attitudes**

Attitude	Means	Possible Actions
Hostile	Will take risks to hurt/avoid you	Attack, interfere, berate, flee
Unfriendly	Wishes you ill	Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult
Indifferent	Doesn't much care	Act as socially expected
Friendly	Wishes you well	Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate
Helpful	Will take risks to help you	Protect, back up, heal, aid

**Table 9.2 Influencing GM Character Attitudes**

Initial Attitude	New Attitude				
	Hostile	Unfriendly	Indifferent	Friendly	Helpful
Hostile	19 or less	20	25	35	45
Unfriendly	4 or less	5	15	25	35
Indifferent	—	0 or less	1	15	25
Friendly	—	—	0 or less	1	15

### Nerve

When a character is faced with immediate danger, the character's nerve may fail them. To randomly determine whether a GM character panics in this kind of situation, give the GM character a Will save with a difficulty based on those in the following table (Table 9.3).

If the Will save fails by five or less, the character cowers for a number of rounds equal to the margin of failure.

If the Will save fails by more than five, the character either becomes panicked or attacks the source of the panic (50/50 chance—determine randomly) for a number of rounds equal to the margin of failure.

**Table 9.3 Sample DCs for Will Saves to avoid Panic**

Situation	DC
The character hears a gunshot	5
A car drives straight towards the character	10
The character loses more than half their hit points	10
The character is suddenly attacked by a knife-wielding maniac	12
The character is trapped in a burning building	12
Someone shoots at the character	12
A large explosion happens near the character	15

**Cowering:** The character is frozen in fear, loses his or her Dexterity bonus, and can take no actions. In addition, the character takes a -2 penalty to his or her Defense. The condition typically lasts 10 rounds.

**Panicked:** A panicked character flees as fast as possible and cowers (see Cowering, above) if unable to get away. The character defends normally but cannot attack.

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