

# The Energy System

In the Energy System (ES) characters have a number of dice worth of energy that they can accomplish tasks with. It's intended to play quickly, not focusing on individual movements of the character but on the overall effect of the character's actions. In the ES the character doesn't swing their sword, they enter a duel. In the ES the character doesn't run for a turn and check how far they ran, they test if they are winning the race.

The player may use as many dice as they wish from this pool but every time a one is rolled, it remains on the table as a one. This is called a "depleted" die. The ones add up in every roll after that but they cannot be rolled again, unless the player rolls two dice or more and all rolled dice are all the same number. This is called a "tuple".

Breaking the process down into steps looks like this.

1. Roll a number of dice out of the character's dice pool.
2. Total the value of all the dice on the table including depleted die, for that character. This is the character's success value.
3. The player puts any dice that are not ones (1's) back into their dice pool and they can be used again.
4. Any dice with ones (1's) on them are depleted. They remain on the table.
5. If more than one dice was rolled and all the dice results were the same number (a tuple), one of the depleted die can be returned to the dice pool.

Rolling large numbers of dice out of a character's dice pool can make succeeding much more likely, but it makes it harder to get a tuple and recover dice. It also makes it possible to roll a number of ones all at once, causing multiple dice to deplete. Normally

this doesn't change the chance of dice depleting but it does when Traits are used.

## Play Order

The Game Master (GM) starts play by setting the scene. Players take turns going clockwise from the GM in announcing their actions but all character actions are considered simultaneous.

Once all players have had their turn, one round has passed. The order starts again with the GM updating the scene and then the players clockwise from the GM.

Players may only declare one action per turn but can react and defend from as many actions as needed. For example if the character Erin makes an attack on another character, that is the player's declared action. During that same turn however, Erin is attacked by two other characters. They may roll to react to those attacks without penalty.

## The Dice Pool

Player characters start off with a number of dice in their dice pool. The recommended starting number is ten (10) die for player characters but for some games a GM may alter that number if desired. In some settings, aliens or super heros may have more dice to start with.

Non-player characters may start with any number of dice in their pool but low level enemies may only start with one or two and have a higher trait level to compensate.

Tasks, mysteries, puzzles, traps and other roadblocks that the players are trying to defeat also get a number of dice and traits to match.

All dice in the dice pool are six sided die (d6) to start out. Traits can raise the die type, or

the player may volunteer to reduce the die type to a four sided die (d4).

Lowering the die type reduces the chance of getting a high result for the roll, but rolling two four sided die (2d4) has an increased chance of getting a tuple. When lowering die to four sided die, they do not deplete unless two die get a one in the same roll. Rolling one four sided die (1d4) cannot deplete a die.

## Traits

A character has Traits that allow them to be more effective at tasks and deplete dice less frequently. A trait can be a skill or piece of equipment. Traits normally apply to only certain tasks. Some are broadly applied while others are tightly constrained in their use.

Broadly defined traits, like “Strength”, “Intelligence” or even things like “Fighter” are broad traits. In character generation, a broad trait costs one die from the character’s pool.

Tightly constrained traits are skills like “Physics” abilities like “Nightvision” or equipment like “Body Armor”. that have a small number of applications. In character generation, the character gets three constrained traits per die spent.

A trait is given a number value. This is the number of dice steps that the skill can increase. For example, a trait with a value of two (2) can increase two dice steps. This means that a six sided die can be stepped up to a eight sided die (d8) and then to a ten sided die (d10) or two six sided dice can be stepped up to eight sided dice. A skill with a value of 3 can improve one die three steps, one die two steps and another one step or three dice one step. The player can assign the dice steps however they desire.

Rolling dice at different steps reduces the chance of getting a tuple, since the largest die can roll higher than all the other dice.

The dice steps are as follows.

- Four sided (d4) Requires two 1’s to be rolled for a depleted die.
- Six sided (d6) This is the starting step
- Eight sided (d8)
- Ten sided (d10)
- Twelve sided (d12)
- Twenty sided (d20)

Higher steps are possible if the dice are available and the GM approves but these dice may be difficult to find. Normally twenty sided dice are the limit in the dice steps.

The GM may decide that some non-player characters can only roll four sided die if they are especially feeble.

## Depletion

Whenever a one is rolled on a die other than a four sided die (d4) it is depleted. It remains on the table as a one for the rest of the game. This die still adds to the players rolls but only at one point per die.

If a die is reduced in a step down to a four sided die (d4) it does not deplete unless two four sided dice roll a one. For every double one rolled on four sided dice, one die is depleted.

If a die that was stepped up rolls a one, it reverts back to a six sided die and is left on the table as a six sided die.

Once a player has all their dice depleted, they are out of play.

## Damage

Under the Energy System, damage is abstracted, meaning that damage may not mean being physically injured. All damage is to the character's ability to act, their energy. This can mean physically being harmed or it could mean the character's desire to act is failing them.

When two characters are in a conflict with each other, they roll dice from their dice pool. The dice that are depleted are considered either the results of exhaustion or some minor damage.

The player in the conflict that rolls the highest does damage to their opponent by removing a die from their pool. This is not considered a depleted die, it does not get placed on the table and does not count toward later rolls. It also cannot be returned to the dice pool by a tuple roll.

For every ten points the winner's higher roll is than the opponent's, one additional die is removed.

Weapons normally have a number of die that they add in damage to rolls. One of these die is rolled and added in to the total after the conflict has been resolved. Weapons may have a skill trait that can be used to resolve the conflict. Damage may or may not deplete depending on if the weapon has a limited number of uses. This is indicated by the word "deplete" next to the damage die. Using a different color for damage die may help reduce confusion. Red is suggested.

Protection also may have a number of dice associated with it that is added to the character's roll after they lost the conflict. Protective items may also have a skill trait that can be used to resolve the conflict. Protective dice *can* deplete. Using a different color for

protective die may help reduce confusion. Blue is suggested.

If a character has no dice left in their dice pool, damage goes to their depleted dice. If the character has no dice left, they are permanently out of play. When this happens the GM and the player should discuss what the final condition of the character is. Did they surrender? Was it physical damage that depleted all their dice and they have died? Perhaps it's a combination of both.

## Tuples

When all the dice in a roll are the same number, for example all two's or all five's, the player has rolled a tuple. This is the generic form of double, triple, quadruple, quintuple, etc.

Rolling a tuple allows the player to return a depleted die to their dice pool where it may be rolled again as normal.

Rolling large numbers of dice make it less likely that tuples will be rolled. If the character needs to regain some depleted dice, rolling two six sided dice (2d6) or two four sided dice (2d4) give the best chances of getting a tuple.

If a player gets a tuple of all ones, something catastrophic has happened. The player may choose to deplete all the dice but one (they get to return that one die to play because of the tuple) or they can remove one die from play, effectively taking damage.

## Resting and Healing

A character can return a depleted die to their pool if they rest for two hours.

Once a character has all their depleted die back, they can recoup a die that has been

removed due to damage for every day of rest they take.

Some equipment or traits may allow depleted die or dice removed because of damage to be restored.

## Noncharacter Challenges

Some challenges to the players do not come from other characters. The challenge may come from weather conditions, a time constraint or a puzzle. Even internal struggles like a doubt or worry can use this system. When this is the case, the challenge is assigned it's own dice pool.

The dice pool of the challenge then is rolled against the character. The winner of the roll does damage to the other. If the player wins the challenge, they damage the challenge by removing die. If the challenge wins, the character is harmed.

The GM should usually roll the same number of dice each turn for noncharacter challenges for situations that are consistent. For example, if climbing a rock wall, it's better to roll the same number of dice each turn.

For challenges that vary, like a severe storm where the wind gusts and then dies down, the GM should vary the number and type of dice being rolled.

In most cases, noncharacter die rolls are better kept to a single die each turn unless they are particularly severe.

The dice values of these challenges may be kept intentionally low for things like mild hypothermia because of wet cloths or a puzzle with no time constraint. The GM may choose to roll a single four sided dice for this pool. Even these mild challenges can slowly tax a character.

If a condition is effecting the whole party, roll only once per turn and the characters all try to beat the same difficulty.

So how do players defeat a cold drizzling rain? They find shelter, or at least move towards shelter. The players should describe how they will overcome the challenge.

## Challenge Difficulties

Challenges in the ES are either from NPCs or noncharacter challenges. The GM may prepare certain challenges before hand but at times they may have to come up with one unexpectedly. In both these situations it's good to know how to gauge the difficulties of these challenges.

Name	#	d6	d8	d10	d12
Easy	5	2d6	1d8	1d10	1d12
Tiring	10	4d6	2d8	2d10	2d12
Draining	20	6d6	5d8	4d10	3d12
Exhausting	40	12d6	9d8	7d10	6d12
Deadly	80	23d6	18d8	15d10	12d12

The different die values displayed should average to around the difficulty number. However, when rolling individually for each turn, higher die values swing more from low to high so are more unpredictable.

Using higher dice values by giving the challenge a trait usually makes the challenge last longer but if the player characters do damage to the challenge it can be defeated more quickly. Higher dice values will also make the roll results swing between high and low more, while lower values will be more consistent.

## Movement

Any character or vehicle can move slowly with no penalty and no roll.

When a character needs to move quickly, the GM should consider what, if any, the challenge would be of moving quickly. If there is no challenge, then the character is free to move. If there is something to overcome, the GM then assigns a dice pool to this task.

For example, in a race, each contestant must run the distance of the entire race. The GM decides on a difficulty of Draining for the race. Each contestant in the race must defeat it for themselves.

When the only challenge is staying away from another character, the characters roll against each other.

## Storytelling

Because the Energy System has a broader focus for each roll than most games, it's very important that the players fill in the story that would normally be demonstrated in other games by multiple dice rolls.

It's suggested that a player announce their intended action, they roll, and then the player narrate the result of that roll. They should take into account the number of dice that depleted and any damage that was done.

The GM may offer input and guidance to the narration process, especially if the narration may go against facts that the players do not have available to them yet.

If a player feels that someone has done a good job of storytelling, they may immediately give that player one of their depleted die. This die will boost all subsequent rolls during the game.

At the end of a round of turns has gone by, the GM may award one depleted die from NPC or noncharacter challenges to one of the players. If the GM does not have any

depleted dice on the table, they may create a depleted die and give it to the player.

If a player gets a tuple they may add these dice to their dice pool. If the player ends the game with more dice in their dice pool than they started with, they make the new number of dice their character's dice pool.

What should players award depleted dice for? Acting shouldn't be necessary but it can help enliven storytelling. Players should look for a full description of the events. Was the storytelling exciting? How closely do they match the dice that were rolled? Did they stick to the events narrated so far? Was the player's portrayal of events faithful to the characters? Does the narration help you to feel what that character is feeling? Remember, this is the Energy System. It deals with exertion and characters tiring out. It deals with their willpower and their desire to keep driving forward. Did the player capture that?

Each table may be as liberal with awarding depleted dice as they want, the more reward that's available, the more players will reach for it. The GM will set the pace, If players are getting plenty of depleted dice, they're more likely to start passing them around.