

# AND THE BEAT GOES ON

*a kickass tabletop roleplaying game by Max Hellenberger*

## CHARACTER CREATION

Your characters are human, in a modern-day setting not unlike our own - select your name, height, weight, and backstory accordingly. Though you are inexperienced in adventuring, due to your ability to sense the Beat, you are above average, and you feel capable in cases of emergency.

### Stats

There are ten stats: Aim, Dodge, Endure, Grab, Hit, Move, Notice, Sneak, Social, and Trivia. For basically any roll other than damage, you simply roll 1d20 and add the relevant stat.

Aim is for ranged combat - any time you want to shoot, throw, or point at something from a distance, make an Aim check.

Dodge is for getting out of the way of things. Usually, you don't have to roll Dodge - your Defense is a fixed number, your Dodge score plus ten. There are cases, however, in which you would have to make a Dodge roll, such as when you're trying to wriggle free of a grappling opponent or through a tight passageway.

Endure is for feats of mental and physical perseverance. Your maximum hit points are equal to thirty plus three times your Endure. Make Endure checks to shrug off the effects of poison, fatigue, hypnosis, or disease. When you take a Breather, you gain back hit points equal to the results of an Endure check.

Grab is for grappling, snatching, hauling, wrestling, catching, and seizing hold of things. Grab is how strong your grip is. Your Load value is ten plus your Grab stat in kilograms.

Hit is for melee combat - any time you want to smack somebody with something, make a Hit check. Hit is also for kicking down doors, smashing windows, and all the various feats of strength that involve punching, kicking, shoving, thrusting, slashing, and bashing.

Move is for all manner of getting from point A to point B. Move is for running, for balancing, for jumping and climbing and sliding and even for crawling. Your move speed, on a grid, is five squares plus your Move score.

Notice is your perception. Use Notice checks to spot traps before they go off, hear ambushes before they happen, and smell trouble before trouble smells you. Good Notice checks beat Sneak checks, and vice versa.

Sneak is for stealthiness. Use Sneak to tiptoe past sleeping guard dogs, to stay out of the line of sight of security cameras, or come up from behind someone in combat. Sneak is also for sleight of hand, picking pockets, walking without leaving footprints, and blending into a crowd.

Social is for anything related to interaction with and manipulation of other people. Use Social checks to mislead, perform, haggle, distract, seduce, or negotiate.

Finally, Trivia is for anything and everything not covered by the previous nine categories. Trivia checks cover esoteric knowledge and specific skills. Make Trivia checks to attempt to identify rare fungi, or to know how to hotwire a car, or to hack a database, or to read ancient Etruscan, or to appraise artwork.

When creating your character, you are allotted twenty points. Distribute these twenty points among your ten stats, with each stat being somewhere between five and negative one. Consider a zero to be baseline human average, and a five to be exceptional, but not to the level of superhuman.

Your Defense is ten plus your Dodge (so it's somewhere between 9 and 15). Your Load is ten plus your Grab in kg (so it's also somewhere between 9 and 15). Your max HP is thirty, plus three times your Endure score (so it can be a minimum of 27 to a maximum of 45.)

### Perks and Penalties

Perks and Penalties are extra flavour that you can add to your character - you are under no obligation to take any, but for every Perk you take, you must also take a Penalty to balance it out. The maximum number of Perk-Penalty pairs you can take is five. In general, Penalties are slightly more disadvantageous than Perks are advantageous, because you're expected to take Perks in areas your character will use often and Penalties in areas your character will neglect.

#### Perks:

Anatomical Affinity - When attacking a fellow humanoid, instead of doubling damage for every ten points by which you beat their Defense, you get to double damage for every nine

points by which you beat their Defense. You may take this Perk multiple times to bring this down to eight, seven, etc. (Example - a prone, unaware human has a defense of 0. If you take this Perk twice and make an attack roll of 16, you get quad damage!)

Booyah! - You know that side on your d20 that says "20"? You can go ahead and pretend it says "22". This Perk does not apply to downbeated checks.

Cheerleader - You may make an inspirational speech to any and all allies who can hear and understand you as a three-tick action. Make a Social check, and divide the results by five - that's a bonus your listeners can now apply to any one roll they make on their next turn.

Cold-Blooded - When making an attack against a helpless enemy (not merely unaware - they have to be completely incapable of defending themselves) you may take four ticks to make an attack at +20.

Eight Ball, Corner Pocket - Normally, when using ricochets to make a bank shot off of a solid object, you take a -10 to your attack roll for every ricochet. With this Perk, you can have your bullets bounce around as much as you like - there's no penalty to the shot.

Extra Breakbeat - If your breakbeat buildup is higher than two, count it as one less (so the buildup checks you have to make as you use your powers would go 2, 2, 3, 4...). You may take this perk more than once to make it 2,2,2,3... 2,2,2,2,3... etc.

Extra Downbeat - Same as above, but for downbeat buildup. The lower buildup number also applies to how long you spend dancing, if you fail your buildup check.

Favoured Weapon - Choose a type of weapon (club, sword, dagger, axe, dart, bow, pistol, rifle, chain... ask your GM if you want some other type not listed) - gain a +2 to any attack roll you make with this weapon. You may take this Perk more than once, and you may apply it to either a different weapon type, or the same weapon type for a cumulative bonus.

Flavoured Weapon - Choose a type of weapon (club, sword, dagger, axe, dart, bow, pistol, rifle, chain, etc) - when wielding one of these weapons, it is considered seasoned. Enemies who take at least twenty points of damage or are slain with a seasoned weapon become Delicious.

Hammerspace - Your Load is effectively infinite, regardless of your Grab stat. You can carry any number of things, as long as each individual item is light enough for you to pick up with one hand. This ability does not give you extra Stuff during character creation, and it doesn't prevent others from seeing and stealing items from your person. Although this does, in theory, allow you to wear hundreds of bullet proof vests with no movement penalty,

you'd only get the armour benefit from one of them.

**Healing Factor** - Gain a +5 bonus to Endure checks made to determine Hit Points restored when taking a Breather. You may take this Perk more than once, the benefits stack.

**Helpful** - Typically, when two people are attempting to do something together, they both make the relevant roll, and the end result is whichever of the two rolls is higher. With this perk, you add +5 to the end result of that process, even if it isn't your check that comes up highest.

**Hurried Attack** - You can make an attack in one tick, instead of two, but that attack is made at a -20 penalty.

**Longstrider** - A standard two-tick move is five plus your Move stat in squares. With this Perk, you get an extra square to that distance. You may take this Perk multiple times, and the effects stack.

**Rage** - You can choose to enter or leave an enraged state at the start of your turn. When in a rage, you gain a +1 to all attacks made, at the expense of a -1 to your Defense until your turn comes up again. You may take this Perk more than once, adding up to +2/-2, +3/-3, etc.

**Read the Subtitles** - Even if you can't make the Trivia check to understand the language being spoken, and even if your character has no backstory reason for it, you can understand any spoken or written language. This ability does not allow you to speak or write in the language in question - in fact, though you understood it perfectly, you can't even repeat back what you just heard.

**Spot the Goatee** - You can make a Notice check to determine whether or not someone is a bad guy, without any other corroborating evidence. The badder the guy, the easier the check, regardless of his actual appearance.

**Thick-skinned** - When you take blunt, slashing or piercing damage, subtract one from the damage dealt. This Perk doesn't apply to fire, acid, bullets, or any sort of special damage. You may take this Perk more than once, and it stacks to -2, -3, etc, and it does stack with armour.

**Tickets to the Gun Show** - Your physique is exceedingly attractive. You may use your Dodge, Hit, Grab, or Move stats (whichever's highest) in place of your Social stat for checks made to impress, seduce, or intimidate.

## Penalties:

**Fast Buildup** - When rolling your breakbeat or downbeat check, count your buildup as one higher. You may take this penalty more than once to make it +2, +3, etc. The higher buildup applies both to the buildup check and to the number of rounds you'd have to dance if you failed it on a downbeat.

**Fumble** - If you roll a 1 on a d20 for any reason - on attacks, on Move checks, on Trivia checks, even on Breathers taken while unconscious - you somehow foul up and attack yourself. If you're unarmed, you take d6 damage. If you're carrying a melee weapon, you take full damage from it. If you're carrying a ranged weapon, you simply club yourself with it and take 2d6. Fortunately, regardless of how low your Defense is, this damage is never doubled.

**Kick Me Sign** - You take a -10 to any Sneak attempt to pass by an enemy undetected. If someone or something is already inclined to attack you, it will always do so. In combat, if a foe can target you and another member of your party, and they don't have a clear incentive to do otherwise, they will always choose to target you. Any Social roll you attempt to make them surrender or parley will automatically fail.

**Near-sighted** - Take -1 penalty to Notice checks for every square away the thing you're trying to Notice is. In combat, you're considered unaware of anything six squares or further away from you.

**Not Good With Computers** - You are completely incapable of operating anything more complicated than a wristwatch. Attempting to operate a computer, control panel, or electronic lock causes it to foul up and permanently break in whatever way is least advantageous to you. This ability cannot be used against robotic enemies - any attempt you make to disable them automatically causes them to become stuck in a killing frenzy that targets you and your allies.

**Particularly Shitty** - You may only take this Penalty if you have one of your stats at -1. Now, it's a negative five! That's a ridiculous number for a stat to be at! If you have more than one stat at -1, you may take this Penalty more than once, and apply it to a different stat each time. All rolls and derived stats are affected - so if you applied this Penalty to Endure, you'd only have 15 HP!

**Poor Impulse Control** - In combat, every round, regardless of whatever else is going on, your character must make an attack against someone if at all possible. If you can't hit a bad guy and can hit a team mate, you must make that attack. If both bad guys and good guys are out of range, you don't hit yourself, but you do spend at least two ticks jumping up and down, smacking things around you and cursing like Yosemite Sam.

Slow - A standard two-tick move is five plus your Move stat in squares. With this Perk, you subtract two squares from that distance. You may take this Perk multiple times, until you're down to one square - you have to have some movement distance.

Stagger - If you take damage for any reason, make an Endure check. If your check is less than the damage dealt, you lose a tick from your next round. If you take multiple hits in one round, you can lose multiple ticks.

Sting Like a Butterfly - When dealing damage of any sort, subtract 1. You may take this Penalty more than once, and it stacks to -2, -3, etc. And yes, if you made a really good attack roll and get to double your damage, this Penalty is applied before the multiplier.

Thin-skinned - Whenever you take damage for any reason, add one to it. This applies to any and all sorts of damage. You may take this Penalty more than once, and it stacks to +2, +3, etc.

Two Left Feet - When making a Move check to climb, jump, swing, or traverse difficult terrain, if you fail the check you not only fall prone wherever you are - you also take 2d6 damage for doing so. This 2d6 is in addition to any other normal falling damage you would otherwise take.

..What? - You always go last in the Initiative. If more than one person in the party takes this Penalty, then it's a roll-off between them to see who goes last-last.

## BASIC COMBAT MECHANICS

### Ticks

Different types of actions take up different amounts of time and attention, and this is expressed in "ticks". (They are called "ticks" because we already have two meanings for "beat" and we don't need a third.)

Speaking, thinking, seeing, and simply enduring things take no ticks.

Simple things, such as flipping a light switch, opening an unlocked door, dropping a held item, sitting from a standing position, standing from a sitting position, drawing a gun from a holster, drawing a sword from a scabbard, or taking a single step are one tick.

Making a melee or ranged attack, tossing an item, moving a few steps, dropping prone or standing back up from prone, or grabbing an item out of your pocket are two-tick actions.

More complicated actions can take three or four ticks - loading a gun, attempting to hotwire a car, typing a password, removing or donning an article of clothing, etc.

Typically, you get four ticks in a round (i.e., you're "on 4/4 time"), but if you're using downbeat abilities, you can use an ability at the start of your turn to give yourself an extra four ticks for that turn. Also, there are items, special conditions, and morale influences that can give you more or fewer ticks per round - these are usually persistent. In addition, it is possible to be so flustered and addled that you cannot perform any actions in a round, with the exception of taking a Breather.

Taking a Breather is a four-tick action that allows you to regain a number of hit points equal to an Endure check. What makes a Breather special is that you can always take it, even if you're running on fewer than four ticks per round. If you have fewer than four ticks, a Breather simply takes as many ticks as you have - even if you're down to one or to zero ticks, you can still take a Breather, though you cannot perform any other action that round.

Conversely, even if you're at eight or more ticks per round, you can't take more than one Breather per round, though the Breather you take still only takes up four ticks - you can take a Breather and do something else.

If you are knocked down past zero hit points, you lose consciousness, which means that you automatically take a Breather every round until you're back to positive HP - and because you're unconscious, you can't choose to downbeat or apply Mayhem points to these Breathers.

There are some times the GM may ask you to react to things - to make a Grab check to keep hold of something, or a Move check to stay standing on shifting ground, or an Endure check versus toxic gas. - these reactions never take up ticks.

### Initiative

When combat begins, everyone aware of it rolls a Notice check - this is their Initiative. The combatant with the highest Initiative acts first, then the next highest, and so on. If two combatants tie, they roll off between them to determine who is higher in the Initiative order. Once every combatant has acted, any environment effects (spreading fires, erupting geysers, shifting ground, cumulative damage, etc) happen, and then action returns to the

top of the Initiative order.

Sometimes, you can choose to act before or after your turn comes up.

In either case, you can't defy the turn order until after your first turn - if you haven't taken an action in combat yet, you're still considered unaware. Once you have acted in combat, though, you can send ticks forward or backward in time, always in response to specific actions.

You may send ticks forward in the turn order to set up an action to take effect once a specific event happens - say, you want to attack someone as soon as they come through a door, or to time your attack to happen at the same instant as someone else's. In this case, you have to mention, when your turn comes up, that this is what you're doing, what your delayed action is going to be, and what the trigger condition will be. For example, if you're on four ticks per round, you can take a two-tick move to stand next to a door, and proclaim that you're going to use your other two ticks to make an attack as soon as anyone comes through that door - you'd be able to make your attack as your target comes through, and the results of that attack will be worked out before your target can complete their movement through the door. (The downside to this, of course, is that if the trigger condition you set does not occur before your next turn, the ticks you sent forward to deal with it go unused!)

Conversely, if something happens to you that you didn't anticipate, you can "borrow" ticks from your next round to react to it. If an object is tossed in your general direction, you can try to grab it. If someone runs past you, you can reach out to attack or trip them. If someone attacks you, you can attempt to parry their thrust. You must have enough ticks in your next round to borrow to take these actions, and these ticks are used up - if you've only got four ticks per round and you parry two attacks, you'll have nothing to do when your turn comes along!

(Even if you're planning on using a downbeat ability to give yourself extra ticks on your turn, you still can't borrow more ticks than you would normally have in the next round.)

(And no, if you use up ticks from your next round this way, you can't still take a Breather at fewer than four ticks - that option's for people who have fewer than four ticks to a round, not for people who have all their ticks but spent them parrying and tripping people.)

### Attacking

When making an attack against anyone or anything, you're generally rolling  $d20 + \text{Hit or Aim}$ , and trying to get equal to or higher than their Defense. Generally, if a humanoid is

aware of you and can defend themselves normally, their Defense is their Dodge plus 10. If they're not aware of you, but are otherwise unimpeded, their Defense is only 10. If they're unconscious, tied up, or otherwise unable to react, their Defense is 0.

If your character has a Dodge stat lower than 0, yes, it actually means that their Defense is lower than an unaware character would be... but no, this doesn't mean that you can bring your Defense up by closing your eyes. If you chose to give your character a Dodge of -1, your Defense is a 9, even if you're surprised!

If you're attacking something larger or smaller than an adult human, the Defense is higher for smaller targets and lower for larger targets - bigger things are easier to see and to hit. Thus, the Defense for a foe larger than a human that is incapable of dodging (such as, say, the broad side of a barn) is actually lower than 0.

Damage is determined by the type of weapon being used - unarmed damage is 1d6, simple blunt weapons are usually 2d6, daggers or staves are 3d6, handguns, swords and axes are in the 4d6 range, high-powered rifles are 6d6 and higher.

If you beat your target's Defense by more than ten, whatever you roll for your damage is doubled. This is cumulative - if you beat your target's Defense by twenty, your damage is multiplied by four, if you beat it by thirty, your damage is octupled, etc. Note that this is a multiplier, it doesn't increase the number of dice rolled - octuple unarmed damage is 1d6 x 8, not 8d6. (This doubling represents your character's ability to hit someone particularly hard, or in a vulnerable area, and, as such, only applies when you're fighting entities with discernible anatomy or weak spots. It would not apply in the case of the aforementioned broad side of a barn.)

Armour doesn't change how difficult it is to hit someone, but it does decrease the damage they take, generally by one or two points per hit. Any clothing that actually acts as armour will have a weight.

Unless otherwise specified, assume that any hits made against another humanoid are going to hit in the center mass. If you want to make a called shot to a particular part of their anatomy, their Defense is higher - assume that hitting someone in the hand is as difficult as hitting a tiny hand-sized person. It is entirely up to the GM's discretion if a given body part or piece of equipment can be targeted, and, if so, what the effects of hitting it would be - if you have something nifty and specific in mind, ask ahead of time if it'll be possible, and what the relevant modifiers would be.

Any time you roll a one on an attack, it misses, regardless of how many bonuses you have tacked onto the attempt.

## Movement

The battle grid is made up of squares that are five feet(ish) on a side, just like in D&D. Moving diagonally works like in D&D, too - why reinvent the wheel?

Making a single five-foot step is a one-tick action. Making a standard move (usually five plus your Move stat number of squares) is a two-tick action. And yes, you can make multiple steps and multiple moves in a round, if you have enough ticks to do them with.

Exotic types of movement (jumping, sliding on bannisters, swinging on ropes, etc.) require a three-tick Move check. In general, if you've got some reason why you should be able to move faster or better than simply walking or running, you can make a Move check and move that distance in squares - although most types of special movement like this will only allow you to move in a specific direction or a specific distance (you can't slide on a bannister somewhere that bannister doesn't go, for example). If you're trying to get to a specific square, and you fail the check to make it that far, you only go as far as your check will take you, and your character falls prone.

If you're planning on special-moving up to someone and making a melee attack in the same turn, you can choose to take any excess points from your Move check and apply them as a bonus to your attack roll. (So, for example, if you want to leap over a ten-square chasm and smack the person on the other side, you'll need a running start of at least three squares, and can only travel in a straight line. You need to make a thirteen Move check to clear that, and you roll an eighteen - now you've got an extra five to add to your Hit roll! It should be noted, of course, that you'd better have more than four ticks in this round, since that'd be a three-tick move, followed by a two-tick attack.)

Attempting to drop down from a high place without taking damage is a two-tick Move check, equal to the distance in feet (or thirds of a meter, whichever's easier). If you fail the check, you take the difference between your check and the distance in damage. (So if you're trying to drop twenty feet and roll a sixteen, you take four points of damage - this number can be higher or lower, if you're landing on spikes or on pillows.)

When swimming through water (or a water-like substance), a two-tick move only allows you to move a number of squares equal to your Move stat, to a minimum of one. Any sort of special-move under water (such as kicking off a solid object) will only allow you to move half the result of a Move check.

## Carrying Things

Your character has a Load value that's equal to your Grab stat plus ten in kilograms - every time what you're carrying goes up by that amount, you get another -1 to any physical roll (Anything other than Notice, Social and Trivia checks) - and yes, that does impact your Defense, your Breathers and your movement speed, but not your HP.

So, as an example, if your Grab stat is a 2, your Load value is 12. If you're carrying 38 kg of gear (that's a lot!), you get a penalty of -3 to your Aim, Dodge, Endure, Hit, Grab, Move, and Sneak rolls, your Defense is 3 points lower, and the distance you can move in a two-tick action is 3 squares less (to a minimum of 1).

Don't bother adding up weight for normal clothing, or tiny BS things like your wallet and keys, but do take it into account for armour, weapons and tools. If something is particularly awkward to carry, the GM might tell you to count it as heavier than it actually is for calculating your Load - for example, a large, loose coil of chain might actually only be two kg, but you'd have to count it as five kg in terms of how difficult it is to carry. Any clothing that provides an armour bonus will always have a weight.

The maximum amount you can carry is ten times your Load. You can attempt to lift more than that with a Grab check (results of the check times ten kg), but that's only to lift - you can't walk around and fight with it.

(If you need these numbers in pounds for whatever reason, just multiply by two - it doesn't have to be exact.)

## THE BEAT

There is a Beat to the Universe.

It's subtle. It's faint. And it's everywhere.

The Beat throbs in every heartbeat, thrums in every leaf, vibrates in machinery, sings in the silent air in empty spaces.

You hear this Beat. You always have, and it's strange to you that other people don't hear it. When you see someone moving in time to the Beat, things go well for them. When you see someone moving out of sync with the Beat, they fumble and fail.

The Beat is useful to you.

Your characters are all Hearers. They can hear the Beat and choose to act with it or against it, on the downbeat or on the breakbeat. When they move on the downbeat, their actions are more likely to succeed - they hit harder, heal faster, jump higher, etc. When they move on the breakbeat, something is fundamentally wrong with their actions, and the Universe itself must spasm to correct matters, resulting in weird or unnatural effects.

Neither downbeating nor breakbeating is "unnatural" or "evil". They just are.

Of course, there are potential side effects to overuse of your abilities. If you downbeat too much, you can get caught up in the Beat, and find yourself dancing and moving perfectly in sync with it... regardless of what you should actually be doing. If you breakbeat too much, you can lose the Beat, and spend some time no longer being a Hearer. In combat, you have to choose between either downbeating or breakbeating - once you've done one, you can't do the other until you've had a few minutes to clear your head.

### Downbeat

You can choose to downbeat any check made with a d20, except for Notice checks the GM asks you to make (because if we're checking to see if you see something you're not anticipating, you wouldn't know to downbeat) and Trivia checks to determine if you know something (because no amount of humming and foot-tapping will put new knowledge into your brain). When you downbeat a check, you automatically get a 20!

Even though you just got a twenty for your roll, you still have to roll your d20. You have what's called a "buildup", which is equal to one plus the number of downbeat abilities you've used so far in combat. Every time you use an ability, you have to roll against your buildup - and, if you can't hit that number, you spend that many rounds in a blissed-out dancing stupor.

So, for example, if you've already downbeated three checks so far in one combat, and you attempt to downbeat a Move check to swing on a tapestry, you have to roll a five or higher (1 + 4 downbeats) to prevent becoming entranced in the Beat. If you happen to roll a four or lower, you still succeed in your action, but then immediately begin dancing for five rounds - which can be particularly hazardous if you planned to swing down next to an enemy and attack him... now you've swung down next to your enemy and started boogieing ineffectually right beside him.

While dancing in this way, you are incapable of defending yourself normally, so your Defense is 10 unless otherwise noted. If you are struck or injured in any way, or if someone uses a particular breakbeat ability to snap you out of it, the effect ends immediately.

Even if you've worked through your dance, the downbeats you've done previously are still built up - if our tapestry-swinging example finished dancing for five rounds and then attempted to downbeat yet another check, she'd still have to make a roll a six or higher to keep from dancing for another six rounds. The only things that clear this buildup are a few minutes of relative calm outside of combat, or being knocked unconscious and waking back up.

There are two things you can do with a downbeat that don't augment an existing check - you can use a downbeat to restore the ability of a character who's used too many breakbeat abilities, or you can use one to give yourself more ticks in a round..

You can only give yourself more ticks at the start of your turn (an ability which, obviously, itself takes no ticks). When your turn starts, add one to your downbeat buildup and make your roll as normal. If you fail your roll, of course, it doesn't matter how many ticks you have - you spend them all dancing. If you succeed, however, you gain an extra four ticks to that round. You may use this ability multiple times at the start of your turn, to give yourself eight, twelve, or sixteen extra ticks... but your buildup keeps accumulating, and you must make another check for every four ticks you add!

If your allies are using breakbeat abilities, they can lose their Hearer status, and you can direct your downbeat ability at them to restore it. You add one to your buildup and make your check as normal, then make a smooth dancey motion in their general direction - this action takes one tick, you must have line of sight to your ally to be able to target them, and you can only use it on one ally at a time. This automatically restores the breakbeating character's Hearer status, though it doesn't clear the breakbeat buildup, and they still have

to make checks as normal if they continue using their abilities.

### Breakbeat

Any breakbeat action, to an outside observer, looks like a non sequitur physical and/or vocal spasm, similar to an attack of Tourette's (real Tourette's, not Rob Schneider movie Tourette's). This spasm results in your chosen effect occurring as the Universe automatically compensates for your disruption to the Beat. Any breakbeat action takes one tick, and it can be used to perform any one of the following:

- Apply a -5 penalty to someone's Defense for one full round (starting now).
- Apply a -10 penalty to someone's Defense versus a single attack.
- Apply a -10 penalty to a specific action someone is taking or that you know they're going to take.
- Deal 1d20 of undodgeable, armour-bypassing damage to a single target.
- Jostle or bump any object, as though with about 50 kg worth of telekinesis. You cannot choose the direction of the jostle. If used on a standing foe, they must make a Move check of 10 or higher (that doesn't use ticks) to avoid being knocked prone. This can be used to mess up the trajectory of a jumping person, or a thrown or dropped object, but not a bullet.
- Flip a switch or push a button (this can include the safety or mag release on a gun).
- Cause an object or 5 foot square to be heated or cooled by about 30 degrees Celsius (this is enough to make it disconcerting or uncomfortable, but not enough to do damage).
- Cause a foe to lose two ticks from their next round.
- Cause any nonliving object to age by about ten years. This usually has little effect on stone or plastic, but can cause wood to rot, metal to rust, and food to become completely unusable.
- Allow yourself to make a Sneak check to hide in plain sight, so that foes have to make a Notice check to perceive you, even though you're not hiding behind anything (this effect only lasts for one round).
- Cause someone caught in a downbeat dancing trance to snap back to their senses (though this does not clear their downbeat buildup).

All breakbeat effects that target something other than yourself require you to have line of sight to the object you're attempting to affect, and "line of sight" does extend through glass or mirrors, but not through something like a television screen. If there is some dispute over whether or not something is too far away to be affected, make a Notice check like you would normally to determine if you could see something at that distance - if you can see it, you can affect it.

As with downbeating, you have to keep track of your buildup – how many breakbeat abilities you've used in the past few minutes, plus one – and make a d20 roll every time you use an ability. If you can't get the number of your buildup, your action still succeeds, but you lose the ability to hear the Beat until you've had a few minutes of relative calm to reorient yourself with the Universe. Downbeating players can use an ability to restore your connection to the Beat, but this does not clear your breakbeat buildup – if you continue using breakbeat abilities, you still have to make checks against that slowly increasing number.

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While you can only use one type of ability without taking a few minutes to rest, there is no reason that a character who used downbeat abilities in one combat shouldn't be able to use breakbeat abilities in the next combat or vice versa.

## MAYHEM POINTS

Mayhem points are rewards for pulling off crazy action stunts.

Now, "hitting something really hard and doing a lot of damage" isn't a crazy action stunt. Mayhem points are awarded for creativity and thinking outside the box. Basically, if this game were an action movie, any stunt that would make it into the trailer is deserving of a Mayhem point - provided that you pulled it off!

The decision of what is and is not worthy of a Mayhem point is entirely up to the GM's discretion, and her word is final.

Mayhem points can be spent to add +10 to any roll, including attacks, Endure checks for Breathers, buildup checks, and damage. Alternately, at the end of your turn, you can use a Mayhem point to bump up your Defense by 10, and this lasts until the start of your next turn.

If you have rolled your dice, but the results of your roll haven't yet been stated, it isn't too late to add on a Mayhem point to ensure success! Mayhem points can be spent more than one at a time, and the effects stack.

This is going to be a fast-paced game and there won't be a lot of downtime, but if you manage to get your character laid, you will get ten Mayhem points, guaranteed.

## EXAMPLE

Andrea, Brendan and Clarice have decided, for whatever reason, to attempt to murder an African elephant using broken ski equipment.

As the *Loxodonta africana* in question is fairly docile, the trio has decided to surround it and all attack at once, giving them the element of surprise. They successfully make their Sneak checks to avoid giving away their intentions, and they all roll Notice checks for their Initiative - Alice gets a 16, Brendan gets a 12, and Clarice, who has a -1 for her Notice stat, rolls a 1, so her Initiative is zero. The GM elects to have the elephant make its roll at this time as well, and it gets an eight, but it will not act until after the first round.

Andrea, Brendan and Clarice have decided to get in their first attacks at exactly the same time, so they delay their actions until they're all ready (effectively waiting until Clarice says "ready!" on Initiative count 0). At the same time, they all smack the elephant with their winter leisure gear.

Now, unbeknownst to the players, the elephant has a Dodge of 0, so catching it by surprise doesn't affect its Defense at all. In addition, it's friggin' gigantic, so they only have to make a 6 to hit it - all three characters succeed. Their skis and ski poles count as improvised clubs, so they deal 2d6... but, because the pachyderm has five points of armour, each 2d6 has 5 subtracted from it, so only Brendan actually deals a single point of damage.

All three characters are running on 4/4 time, and they don't have to move, so they can actually get in two attacks this turn.

Andrea decides that she's going to abandon her ski pole and deal damage with breakbeat checks instead. She drops her pole (one tick), and makes a weird twitchy gesture in the elephant's general direction (one tick - she's used all four ticks for her turn). She has to roll against her buildup (two) and succeeds. She deals 1d20 points of damage that bypasses armour... but because she's used a breakbeat action, she can't downbeat that 1d20, and she doesn't have any Mayhem points yet... so she has to accept the measly 2 she rolls for damage.

Brendan decides, this time, that he's going to downbeat his attack, so he checks against a buildup of 2 (and makes it easily), so his attack roll is 20 + his Hit stat of 4 + 2 for his Favoured Weapon bonus (the GM has mercifully decided that his ski counts as a "club"). This adds to 26, which is 20 over the elephant's Defense, so Brendan gets to quadruple his damage - he rolls 7 on his 2d6, multiplies it by 4 to get 28, which, after the five points of armour is subtracted, results in the elephant losing 23 HP.

Clarice decides that the elephant's trunk might be trouble, so she asks the GM if she can target it with an attack. The GM says that yes she can, that the trunk has a Defense of 15, only has one point of armour, and that damage dealt would not come off the elephant's HP, but rather be divided by 5 and then applied as a penalty against anything the elephant tried to do with its trunk. Clarice accepts this and swings her ski at the elephant's trunk... and misses.

The first round is over, the second round starts. The elephant is now in the Initiative order, going after Andrea and Brendan, but before Clarice.

Andrea decides to spend all four ticks this round doing the same thing - dealing damage directly via breakbeat actions. Thus, she gets four one-tick actions this round, and each time, she has to check against her breakbeat buildup of three, four, five, and then six, dealing 1d20 damage each time. On her fourth buildup check, however, she rolls a one, so while she still deals all four instances of damage, she has now lost her Hearer status. Although she's used all her ticks for the round, talking doesn't use ticks, so she blurts out "I lost the Beat!".

Brendan is on the opposite side of the elephant from Andrea, so he can't see her. He takes a two-tick move action to come around to where he has line of sight, then takes a one-tick action to make a boogieing gesture in her general direction, restoring her connection to the Beat. He has one more tick this round, but nothing to do with it, so he mentions to the GM that he's sending that tick forward in the Initiative order, so he can restore Andrea's Beat if she loses it again before his next turn comes up.

The elephant gets its first turn now, and it doesn't like Clarice. It attempts to gore her with a Hit check, and gets a seventeen, which will definitely hit her Defense. Clarice asks the GM if she can steal three ticks from her next turn for a special Move check to jump up onto the elephant's tusk and redirect the power of the beast's attack to spring herself up onto its back. The GM says that she can do this if she makes a Move check that's five points higher than the elephant's attack... and that she'd need to make another Move check (a reaction, so it takes no ticks) of ten or higher to actually land on the creature's back, rather than simply bouncing off and back down to the ground. As Clarice hasn't used the Beat yet in this combat, she decides to downbeat her jump, which, with her Move stat of three, gives her a twenty-three to the jump... which succeeds! She makes the second Move check without having to downbeat it, so now she's balanced on the elephant's back. The GM is impressed, and gives Clarice's player a Mayhem point.

The elephant has two ticks left in its turn, so it takes a swipe at Andrea and connects! The elephant's tusks deal 3d6, so Andrea loses 14 HP.

Clarice's turn has come up, but she now has only one tick - she used three ahead of time! Fortunately, she's downbeating in this combat, so she elects to give herself another four ticks this turn (her buildup is now at a three), and decides to use her Mayhem point immediately on a downbeated attack. Her buildup is now at a three, and her attack is 20 for the downbeat + 10 for the Mayhem point + her Hit stat of 2... and the GM gives a 5 point bonus to her attack since she's up beside the creature's head... making her attack a total of 37. This is thirty points higher than the elephant's Defense, so Clarice gets to octuple her damage - she rolls 10 on her 2d6, so that's 80 points of damage. After subtracting the five points of armour, the elephant loses 75 HP!

Clarice has three ticks left, and attacks again, but without the downbeat and the Mayhem point, her attack is only an eleven... so she still hits, but only does 2d6 minus five. She rolls the same thing for her damage, but the elephant only loses five HP. Her remaining tick goes to waste.

It's now the third round. Andrea uses two more breakbeat actions to deal 1d20 damage each, makes the first buildup check (7) but not the second (8), so she yells out to Brendan that she's lost the Beat again, and Brendan uses the tick he delayed from the last round to restore her again. Unfortunately, this is the third downbeat he's used this combat, and he only rolled a three when he checked against his buildup of four, so while Andrea still gains the benefit of his action, he's now going to be stuck dancing ineffectually for the next four rounds.

As it isn't his turn yet, and he has no ticks left over, Brendan doesn't actually do anything yet. As being caught up in the Beat isn't like losing your Hearer status - it completely consumes your attention - Brendan can't even speak to indicate his predicament. As such, Andrea uses the remaining two ticks of her turn to move away from the elephant - she's hoping to take a Breather next round, and would rather not do so while standing within range of the beast.

Brendan's turn now comes up, and he begins dancing. Andrea sees this and reacts to it, stealing one tick from her next turn to fix him, (her buildup is now all the way to 9, but she makes the check). Unfortunately, this torpedoes her plan to take a Breather next round, as she will have less than four ticks, and no way to get more. It is also unfortunate that Andrea was only able to react after Brendan had started dancing... and his dance was a four tick action. Brendan's turn is now over.

The elephant reaches with its trunk and makes a two-tick Grab check versus Clarice's Dodge check. The elephant wins, so it's got a firm grip on her. With its next two ticks, the elephant uses a Hit check to fling her to the ground. Clarice asks the GM if she can make a Move check to negate some of the damage, but the GM denies it because she's too close to

the ground to have time to react, and the elephant is flinging her with force. Furthermore, the GM declares, her Dodge similarly doesn't apply, because she can't react normally - her Defense is a zero! The elephant's Hit check comes up a nineteen - fortunately just shy of quad damage - and slamming someone into a flat surface only deals 1d6, so a 5 on the die translates to 10 damage. In addition, though, Clarice takes 13 damage, because she's being slammed down from a height of 13 feet. Clarice is down 23 HP, and not feeling too good.

The GM asks Clarice to make a reactive Grab check, which takes no ticks. Clarice does so, and only rolls a five. The GM states that she's lost the grip on her ski when she went down, and will have to spend a tick to pick it back up, in addition to the ticks she'd have to expend to stand up from prone.

It's Clarice's turn, and she takes one tick to grab her ski before taking two ticks to stand up. Unfortunately, she's still next to the elephant as she does this, and the elephant chooses to react to this by taking two ticks from its next turn to attempt to gore her now. Clarice can now defend normally, so her Defense is a twelve, but the elephant makes a twenty-two on its Hit check - double damage! The GM rolls 3d6, gets a 15, and tells Clarice she takes 30 points of damage. With the damage she previously took from being slammed into the ground, Clarice has taken 53 total points of damage, and she only has 36 max HP - she's at negative 17, and unconscious until further notice. Technically, she still has one tick left in her turn, but that's not enough for a Breather, and it can't be sent forward - Clarice's turn is over, the tick is wasted.

It's the next round, and Andrea only has three ticks because she used one to fix Brendan.. She has moved away from the elephant, but only needs line of sight for what she plans to do - she uses a breakbeat action to remove the creature's remaining two ticks for the next round. Andrea's buildup is now all the way to 10, and she rolls a 9 on her buildup check - she's gone Beatless again. Andrea's player curses her d20 and vows to flush it down the toilet once this combat is over. She still has two ticks in her turn, and uses them to move further back.

Brendan's turn comes up, and he has all his ticks. He decides to simply downbeat two more melee attacks. His downbeated attacks are still 20 + his Hit stat of 4 + 2 for his Favoured Weapon bonus = 26, which is still quad damage. His buildup checks for those attacks are five and six... and he fails the second check, meaning he has to dance for six rounds (and since Andrea can no longer use the Beat, she can't fix him!). Fortunately, that last attack with its quadrupled damage was enough to put the elephant down, so combat is over.

Clarice is still unconscious for about a minute, and Brendan dances for a while until Andrea walks over and smacks him. The trio is triumphant!

# And The Beat Goes On Character Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Ht: \_\_\_\_\_ Wt: \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

Aim	Dodge	Endure	Grab	Hit
Move	Notice	Sneak	Social	Trivia

Load: \_\_\_\_\_ kg Defense: \_\_\_\_\_ Buildup: \_\_\_\_\_

HP: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (3xEndure+30) Mayhem Points: \_\_\_\_\_

Perks:

Penalties:

Stuff: