

SKILL BASICS

Skills are learned abilities acquired through a combination of training (skill ranks) and natural talent (an ability). These factors combine to form the parts of a skill check, which is a roll of the die, plus the skill's rank, key ability score, and any applicable modifiers.:

**Skill check = d20 + skill rank +
key ability score + modifiers**

The higher the roll, the better the result. You're usually looking for a total that equals or exceeds a particular Difficulty or another character's check total.

SKILL RANK

Your *rank* in a skill indicates how well trained you are with it. You assign ranks from your role and level to skills, and the maximum rank you can have in any skill is your level +3. You can use some skills even if you aren't trained in them (having no rank). This is known as using a skill *untrained*.

ABILITY SCORE

Each skill has a *key ability*, applied to the skill's checks. Each skill's key ability is noted in its description.

MODIFIERS

Miscellaneous modifiers to skill checks include favorable or unfavorable conditions, bonuses from feats, and penalties for not having proper tools, among others.

ACQUIRING SKILLS

You choose a certain number of skills your character knows at 1st level, based on your role and Intelligence score. For example, a warrior knows four skills at 1st level, plus or minus the character's Intelligence score, so a warrior with Intelligence +1 is trained in five skills at 1st level. A 1st-level character is always trained in at least one skill, regardless of Intelligence. These starting skills begin at four ranks, the maximum rank for 1st level.

IMPROVING SKILLS

As your hero advances in level, you gain additional ranks to assign to skills. You can assign these ranks to existing skills your hero knows, improving them up to the maximum rank of (level +3) or you can assign earned skill ranks to entirely new skills, making your hero trained with a rank in that skill.

Example: A 1st level adept has *Concentration*, *Diplomacy*, *Knowledge* (supernatural), and *Stealth* as her starting skills, all at rank 4. At 2nd level, the adept gains 4 more skill ranks. She may add one rank to each of her known skills, increasing them to 5 ranks each (the maximum rank for 2nd level), apply all 4 ranks to an entirely new skill, or split them up, perhaps adding a rank each to *Concentration* and *Diplomacy*, while applying the remaining 2 ranks to learning a new skill.

UNTRAINED SKILLS

Characters can perform some tasks without any training in a skill, using only raw talent (as defined by their ability scores), but trained characters tend to be better at such things. If a skill description doesn't include "Trained Only," you can attempt tasks involving that skill even if you have no training in it. Your bonus for the skill check is just the key ability score for that skill, with no ranks added in. Untrained characters can still hide or swim, for example; they're just not as good at it as those with training.

Skills that cannot be used untrained are designated as "Trained Only" in their descriptions. Attempts to use these skills untrained automatically fail. In addition to trained only skills, some skills given in this chapter may be in appropriate to certain settings, and the Narrator should feel free to limit access to those skills or ban them entirely. For example, a medieval knight isn't going to learn the Computers skill and while a peasant might pick up ranks in Drive for his ox-cart, he won't be using it to compete in the Indy 500.

HOW SKILLS WORK

When you use a skill, make a skill check to see how well you do. The higher the result, the better the outcome. Based on the circumstances, your check result must equal or beat a particular Difficulty number. The harder the task, the higher the number you need to roll. See Checks in the Introduction for more information.

INTERACTION SKILLS

Certain skills, called *interaction skills*, are aimed at dealing with others through social interaction. Interaction skills allow you to influence attitudes and get others to cooperate with you. Since interaction skills are intended for dealing with others socially, they have certain requirements.

First, you must actually be able to interact with the subject or subjects of the skill. That means the subject must be aware of you and able to understand you. If you don't speak the same language, or they can't hear you for some reason, that's the same as working without the proper tools, imposing a -4 on your skill check, since you have to convey your meaning through gestures, body language, tone, and so forth.

Interaction skills work best on intelligent subjects, ones with Intelligence -3 or higher. You can use them on creatures with lower Intelligence (-4 or -5) but with a -8 penalty on your check; they're just too dumb to get the subtleties of your point. You can't use interaction skills at all on subjects lacking a mental ability. (Try convincing a rock to be your friend—or afraid of you—sometime.)

Some interaction skills last a particular amount of time. Using Intimidate to demoralize an opponent, for example, lasts for only a few seconds (one round). In these cases, the time is always measured from the subject's point of view. If you successfully demoralize an opponent, the effect lasts one full round starting on the target's initiative and ending on the target's place in the initiative order on the following round.

You can use interaction skills against groups, but you must be trying to influence the entire group in the same way. You can use Diplomacy, for example, to sway a group of people and improve their attitude toward you, but you must be trying to convince all of them about the same thing. Everyone in the group must be able to hear and understand you. You make one interaction skill check and the Narrator compares it against each person in the group (or against an average value for the group, to speed things up).

SPECIALTY SKILLS

Some skills cover a wide range of knowledge or techniques. These skills are actually groups of similar skills, called *specialty skills*. When learning one of these skills, you must choose a specialty or a particular aspect of the skill your character is trained in. For example, you might choose the history specialty of Knowledge or the leatherworking specialty of Craft. Skill ranks in one specialty do not provide training in the skill's other specialties.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes each skill, including its common uses. You may be able to use skills for tasks other than those given here. The Narrator sets the Difficulty and decides the results in those cases.

The format for skill descriptions follows. Items that don't apply to a specific skill are left out of its description.

SKILL NAME

KEY ABILITY, TRAINED ONLY, INTERACTION, REQUIRES SPECIALIZATION, REQUIRES TOOLS

The skill name line and the line below it contain the following information:

Skill Name: What the skill is called.

Key Ability: The ability applied to the skill check.

Trained Only: If “Trained Only” is included, you must be trained in the skill in order to use it. If “Trained Only” is absent, characters may use it untrained.

Interaction: If “Interaction” is included, the skill is an interaction skill.

Requires Specialization: If “Requires Specialization” is included, you must choose a specialty for the skill.

Requires Tools: If “Requires Tools” is included, you need to have the proper tools to use the skill. Not having the proper tools results in a -4 penalty to the skill check.

The skill name line is followed by a brief description of the skill and five other categories:

Check: How to make a check for the skill, what the results of the check are, and the basic Difficulty.

Challenges: Any specific challenges associated with the skill and their effects.

Try Again: Conditions on retrying a check with the skill. If this section is absent, the skill can be retried an unlimited number of times.

Action: The type of action required to use the skill, how long it takes.

Special: Any extra information about the skill.

SKILLS

Skill	Ability	Untrained?	Specialization?	Action	Take 10/20
Acrobatics	Dex	No	No	React or move	10
Bluff	Cha	Yes	No	Standard or full	10
Climb	Str	Yes	No	Move or full	10
Computers	Int	No	No	—	10/20
Concentration	Wis	Yes	No	React	—
Craft	Int	No	Yes	—	10 (20 on repair)
Diplomacy	Cha	Yes	No	Full	10
Disable Device	Int	No	No	Full	10/20
Disguise	Cha	Yes	No	—	10
Drive	Dex	No	No	Move	10
Escape Artist	Dex	Yes	No	Full	20
Gather Information	Cha	Yes	No	—	10
Handle Animal	Cha	Yes	No	—	10/20
Intimidate	Cha	Yes	No	Standard or full	10
Jump	Str	Yes	No	Move	10
Knowledge	Int	No	Yes	React or full	10/20
Language	—	No	Yes	—	—
Medicine	Wis	No	No	—	10/20
Notice	Wis	Yes	No	React or move	10/20
Perform	Cha	Yes	Yes	—	10
Pilot	Dex	No	No	Move	10
Ride	Dex	No	No	Move	10
Search	Int	Yes	No	Full	10/20
Sense Motive	Wis	Yes	No	React	10
Sleight of Hand	Dex	No	No	Standard	10
Stealth	Dex	Yes	No	Move	10
Survival	Wis	Yes	No	—	10
Swim	Str	Yes	No	Move or full	10

An “—” entry in the **Action** column means the skill takes longer than a full round. See the skill description for details.