

CREDITS

TITLE

How to Play the Year Zero Engine: Dice Pools, Health, and Stress without Gear Dice

VERSION

1.03

DATE

09 October 2024

AUTHOR

J. Lambert

SOURCE MATERIAL

This guide adapts rules and mechanics detailed in the [Year Zero Engine Standard \(YZE\) Reference Document \(SRD\)](#) that apply to multiple YZE games.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is not affiliated with, sponsored, or endorsed by Fria Ligan AB. The Year Zero Engine System Reference Document is used under [Fria Ligan AB's Free Tabletop License](#).

COPYRIGHT

How to Play the Year Zero Engine: Dice Pools, Health, and Stress without Gear Dice is copyright 2024 by J. Lambert.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is designed as a quick primer that Game Masters (GMs) can send to new players (or new players can obtain themselves) before their first session. Players who read through this before their first session should have general knowledge of how the game and basic mechanics work. This document is not exhaustive and details only what new players need to know for a session to go relatively smoothly. Items and mechanics not covered in this document should be covered by the GM when appropriate.

SYSTEM

This document specifically covers Year Zero Engine (YZE) games that utilize dice pools, health, and stress but not gear dice.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

1. Two sets (1-12) of d6s of visibly different colors
2. Pencil and eraser
3. Scrap paper for notes
4. Dice tray (not required, but very useful)
5. Cards numbered 1-10 (just one set for all players; GM usually provides)

GAME BASICS FOR PLAYERS

SYSTEM AND ROLLING DICE

One of your sets of dice will be your Base (Ability) and Skill dice (going forward "Base" dice). The Year Zero Engine (YZE) utilizes four core Attributes, each with a score, each composed of three different Skills, which also have a score. When you need to roll a Skill, you add the number of the skill to its corresponding attribute and roll that many Base dice.

For example, the GM asks you to roll MOBILITY. You have 2 in the MOBILITY skill and 3 in its parent AGILITY attribute. You would roll 5 dice.

6s are always Successes. Most rolls require only one Success. Additional Successes can get you bonuses depending on the skill rolled and the situation in which the skill was rolled.

You may Push a failed roll one time, re-rolling all dice that did not return a Success, but you will immediately acquire a Stress point (see below).

STRESS DICE

Your other set of d6s will be your Stress dice.

Stress will be added as different stressful events occur (or when you Push a roll). For each point of stress you have, you add that many stress dice to your roll.

For example, the GM asks you to roll STAMINA. You have 2 in the STAMINA skill and 2 in its parent STRENGTH attribute. Your current Stress level is 2. You would roll 4 base dice and 2 Stress dice.

A 6 on a Stress die is still a success. A 1 on a Stress die (Stress die only, a 1 on a Base die does nothing) means you must make a Panic Roll.

PANIC ROLL

To make a Panic Roll, roll a single d6 and add that value to your current Stress level. That will determine how your panic affects you.

For example, on your Panic Roll, you roll a single d6 and get a 4. Your current stress level is 3. Therefore, your Panic Roll result is 7. The GM will tell you what happens.

If you roll a success on any dice and a 1 on a Stress die, your roll may still be successful unless your Panic Roll is a 10 or above. A Panic Roll of 10 or above effectively cancels your action and replaces it with an involuntary action.

TAKING DAMAGE

Your Player Character (PC) has a numerical score for Health. If your PC reaches 0 Health they are Broken and may die (see below).

BROKEN

If you exhaust your Health, you become Broken and are functionally incapacitated for the remainder of the scene/the combat.

You must also make a d6 roll (will be explained by the GM if the situation arises). The result of the roll ranges from a survivable injury or an injury so severe it requires immediate medical intervention to prevent death.

STRESS

The higher your PC's Stress level, the more likely you are to roll a 1 on a Stress die and therefore make a Panic Roll. Panic Roll outcome severities are directly proportional to your Stress level, meaning a very stressed PC will likely have a very bad to catastrophic Panic.

RECOVERY

Health can be recovered and Stress can be relieved. The GM will explain when appropriate.

COMBAT

Combat is played out in Rounds.

Initiative is drawn by both players (for their PCs) and the GM (for NPCs) using cards numbered 1 to 10. The combatant with the lowest card goes first, the second lowest card goes second, and so on. Once all initiatives have been resolved, the Round ends and a new Round starts.

On your turn, you can take one Fast Action and one Slow Action or two Fast Actions. You may hold one Fast Action if you wish to be able to dodge/parry an attack made against you on another combatant's turn. You may dodge/parry before your turn, but that will count as your Fast Action for your turn. You must decide to dodge/parry before you know if your opponent's roll is successful.

ZONES AND RANGES

A Zone is generally defined as the room you are in, the hallway you are in, or a 25 square foot (around 10 square meter) area (if outside). Ranges and Zones are interrelated.

RANGES

Engaged - combatant is right next to you

Short - within a few meters, in the same zone as you

Medium - up to 25 meters away, in an adjacent zone

Long - up to 100 meters away, up to four zones away

Extreme - up to 1 kilometer away

SPECIALTIES

Each character has a specialty unique to their archetype that allows them to do things others cannot. This ranges from additional dice on certain skill rolls to increasing your Encumbrance limit (see below).

ENCUMBRANCE

A PCs Encumbrance limit is equal to double their Strength Ability score. A regular item counts as 1 whereas a heavy item counts as 2 or even 3.

For example, your PC's Strength Score is 4, so they can carry 8 regular size items. They are carrying two regular items, one heavy item, and one very heavy item. They can only carry 1 more regular item.