

This document is no substitute for knowing the rules in the book, but hopefully it'll serve as a jump-start or a quick reference. It primarily covers rules that you need to know in the heat of battle. We expect that you can take the time to ask others to explain the rules that cover more leisurely situations.

## Setting:

NERO West is set in the world of Tyrra, on the continent of Avalon which is shared with all of the other NERO International game chapters. We are at the western edge of the continent, in a region known as the Cynder Valley. The Cynder Valley is isolated by deserts, impassable mountains, and water. However, a thin and dangerous road winds eastward and can lead to the other settled areas of the continent. (You can take your NERO West character and play him or her in these other chapters.) The valley is also rather culturally isolated.

The northern half of the Cynder Valley is controlled by the warlord kingdom of Hightower where a system of trial by combat has elevated the strongest to the highest positions in the land. Anyone can gain power in Hightower, if they're strong enough. To the south lies the ancient kingdom of Quadlum, a nation with a more traditional feudal-style nobility. Quadlum, however, only permits Elves to join the nobility. Until just a handful of years ago, these two kingdoms were at war.

On the border between these lies the city of Mandrake's Landing, and it is here, poised between these two enemies, that our game is set. Mandrake's Landing has an ancient history that is only slowly being revealed in-game, and has proven a nexus for adventurers from across the land.

## Classes:

Anyone can buy just about any skill (except certain racial abilities like scenting), but the class you choose determines which skills are more or less expensive.

- **Fighter:** Martial skills are cheap for fighters. Typically points are spent on proficiencies, which help fighters do more damage.
- **Scholar:** Spell skills are cheap for scholars. Typically they build up a spell "pyramid" and can cast more and more powerful spells at higher levels. There are Earth scholars who study magic of healing, binding, and can (but maybe shouldn't) cast chaos corruption magic and necromancy. And there are Celestial scholars who study the elements (fire, air, earth, water), and can cast binding spells, and battle magics like flame bolts and ice storms.
- **Templars** are a cross between scholars and fighters. For them spells are cheap, but not as cheap as for scholars, and weapon skills are cheap, but not as cheap as for fighters.
- **Roges** learn a variety of skills. They're not great fighters or scholars, but can learn to backstab, lockpicking, trap making, and alchemy making.

## Races:

Races have advantages and disadvantages, and every race but human is required to wear costuming and or makeup specific to the race.

- **Barbarian:** Stronger (more hit points), can learn to detect celestial magic, but not good scholars.
- **Biata** (feathered humanoids, descended from griffons): Hate and can't learn celestial magics, but can learn to defeat charm and sleep effects.
- **Drae** (dark elves with black skin): Excellent archers, can learn to resist sleep and charm effects, but weaker in the day and can't use 2-handed clubs or swords.

- **Dwarf:** Stronger (more hit points), can learn to resist poisons, are natural armor and weaponsmiths, but have a hard time learning celestial magic and can't use any 2-handed weapons.
- **Elves:** Slightly weaker than most races (less body hit points), but can learn to resist charms and sleep effects and excel at archery. Can't use 2-handed clubs or swords.
- **Gypsy:** Flamboyant human-like people, who usually speak with an accent. Can curse those who offend them.
- **Half ogres:** Strong (more hit points), but poor scholars.
- **Half orcs:** Similar deal.
- **Hobling:** (The hobbit of NERO) Can learn to resist poisons, good at lockpicking and disarming traps, weaker (less hit points) than most, and can't be a fighter or wield any 2-handed weapon.
- **Mystic Wood Elf:** (Few and far between, these elves have horns). They can learn to break and resist charm effects, and they are natural craftspeople and in fact must spend experience learning craftsman skills at each level.
- **Sarr:** (Cat people. Most members of this race are slaves.) Can learn to resist poison, have particularly keen scenting abilities, but can't use blunt or ranged weapons and can never buy the waylay skill (which lets you knock someone out if you catch them by surprise from behind).
- **Scavenger:** (Animal-people, there are rat, deer, weasel, bear, etc. scavenger types) Can learn to resist poisons, have the same scenting abilities as sarr, but are poor scholars.

## Weapon Combat

Most basically, a character has "hit points" which are a combination of armor and body. When a weapon is swung, the attacker announces its damage by saying something like "three normal". If the weapon hits a valid target, the victim subtracts the three points from their hit point total. At zero, you fall down. NERO combat is full speed combat with weapons that are covered with foam and thus relatively safe to use. Still, there are rules for how to fight, some of which are summarized below:

- Good swing: Between 45-90 degrees, firm but not hard, which impacts solidly in a valid hit location. If someone tells you you're swinging too hard, you are swinging too hard.
- Good block: Takes out about half the strike's power. Weapon or shield must be properly held (2 hands for 2-handed weapons, 1 hand for 1-handed weapons). The weapon must be the only thing in your hand.
- Good: **Call and role-play hits.** If you're hit in the arm, say "ow" or "taken" or "got me" and act like you just really got hit.
- Good: Damage calls: These must be clear and correct for a strike to count.
- Good: **Pinning weapons:** You may apply pressure with your weapon or shield to an opponent's weapon outdoors to pin it.
- Bad: **Pinning Weapons:** You may not do this indoors or in a doorway. You can't use weapons that are designed to trap other weapons.
- Bad: **Never touch** another player except with a NERO-safe weapon or packet when in combat. Even out of combat, you should ask permission to touch them.
- Bad: **Machinegunning.** Hitting the same location with quick-repetitive strikes. All hits ignored.
- Bad: Head, neck, groin, or hand-on-weapon shots don't count. But if a player blocks with his hand, the hit counts.
- Bad: **Charging.** If you can touch your opponent's breastbone with an outstretched hand, you're charging. Charging forces the opponent to move back, even if they might impair their safety.

- Bad: If you don't have the weapon skill, you can't attack or **block** with that weapon. Any hits on the weapon either force you to drop it, or take the damage.
- Bad: "**Turtling**" with a shield. Hiding behind a shield with little more than your head showing.

**Packet Attacks**

Ranged attacks are done with cloth packets filled with birdseed. These attacks can be simple damage, like a weapon strike, or magical effects like spells. In general, they take effect if they hit you and don't take effect if they don't hit you. Keep in mind the following:

- Spells and Alchemy packet strikes count even if they graze or hit a weapon or shield.
- Ranged weapon packets only count if they hit your person. They can be blocked with a weapon or shield.
- The call or incant must be completed before the packet is thrown.
- The packet must be thrown within 3-seconds of completing the call or incant.
- The call or incant must be clear and correct.

**About Hit Points: Armor, Body & Protectives**

- A character will have X body points, and Y armor points.
- Normally, when hit, armor points go first, then body.
- Some magics add to armor or body points. Most common are Bless and Greater Bless which add 5 and 10 points to body, respectively and Shield and Greater Shield, which add 5 and 10 points to armor, respectively.

Spell: <i>Magic Armor</i> – 1 <sup>st</sup> hit, no matter how much damage
Spell: <i>Greater Shield</i> – 10 points
Spell: <i>Shield</i> – 5 points
<b>Armor, if any, up to 44 points</b>
Spell: <i>Greater Bless</i> – 10 points
Spell: <i>Bless</i> – 5 points
<b>Body Points – By class &amp; Level</b>
At 0 Body – Unconscious
-1 Body – Bleeding out, Dying
DEAD

**Damage Types and "Carriers"**

When swinging with a weapon, one calls the amount followed by the type of damage. For example, if I had a flaming sword that did 3 points of flame damage, I'd call out "3 flame" each time I struck. The damage type is important, since some creatures are affected more or less by different types. For example, some undead are only affected by Silver weapons. Calls can get complicated, such as "32 elemental chaos slay", or devastating, such as "100 massive obliterate".

Some creatures have channeled carrier attack types. These have additional affects, other than damage. Often these effects duplicate spell or alchemy effects. Typically, a channeled carrier must affect the target's body for the carrier to take effect. So someone swinging "5 wither" wouldn't wither you unless they had fought through your armor and protective spells first.

Some other creatures can "spellstrike" spells. These effects work if the blow lands, even on a weapon, as if the spell had been successfully cast and hit with a packet.

Certain monsters take reduced damage from some attacks, or ignore the damage completely. If hit, they'll call either "reduced" or "no effect", as appropriate. You won't know what it's reduced to, necessarily.

**Spell, Alchemy, and Monster Effects**

There are a wide variety of magical effects that NERO players are expected to know and react to appropriately. There isn't a shortcut to this knowledge, we'll attempt to summarize.

Effects can be delivered by packet, weapon strike, or area of effect. Spells are typically packet, as are alchemy effects. Monsters use both packets and weapons. Traps, glyphs and other such things have areas of effect.

**Causing Damage:**

**Basic Damage:** Any weapon strike combined with a number does damage to one's hit points.

**Chaos:** This type of damage goes straight to body, bypassing armor. i.e. "I call upon chaos to cause wounds, 10 body".

**Celestial Eldritch:** This type of damage is taken as normal damage. "I call forth a lightning bolt, 10."

Silver, Magic, Fire, Ice, etc.: For most creatures, these damage types are just like normal. But some creatures take more or less damage from different types.

**Binding Effects**

These are **Pin, Bind, Web, Confine, Paralyze, Petrify,** and **Imprison**. **Pin** roots the right foot to the ground. **Bind** ties up your arms. **Web, Confine, Paralyze, Petrify,** and **Imprison** basically mean you can't move or act.

**Crippling Effects**

These are **Drain, Nausea, Vertigo, Sleep, Disease, Death, Taint, Feeblemind,** and **Laugh**. Most of these prevent the use of skills entirely, and some prevent you from moving. If you're affected with one, you're out of the fight.

**Weakening Effects**

These come in a variety of forms:

- **Destruction** does double damage
- **Wither** cripples one limb
- **Silence** silences you
- **Weakness** makes you swing 4 points less damage

**Stuff Effects**

These mess with thing you've got. **Disarm & Enflame** make you drop it, **Shatter & Destroy** destroy the item.

**Keep-Aways**

- **Desecrate/Sanctuary, Shun, Repel** – If you're affected by one of these, chances are you have to get away from the one who affected you.

**Charms**

- **Charm, Dominate & Enslavement** put you under the control of the one who affected you, **Charm** making you a friend, **Enslavement** giving them total control.
- **Berserk** makes you attack everything, **Hallucinate** makes you see pink elephants, **Love** makes you fall in love with the target, **Paranoia** makes you think they really are out to get you, **Fear** makes you run away at full speed until you're out of sight.