

**Copernicus Tactical**  
**Rule document for basic game mechanics**  
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(Designer's note: This is a draft and therefore not accurate. Some details might have been left out for now.)

## 1. The Battlezone

The battlezone is made of squares and each of them may contain terrain objects and characters or character-like objects. There's no definitive scale for mapping squares to metric units but we can assume a square is an area that one person fits in comfortably. This means that a typical terrain object might be a group of one to three trees, a piece of fence etc. Buildings typically span multiple squares.

A battle is typically considered close quarters if there's less than ten squares between opposing units. Battlezone dimensions vary, and largest may be over a hundred squares from end to end. All measurements of movement and range are done by counting squares either vertically or horizontally. Line of sight on the other hand is considered a straight line.

## 2. Time unit: round

The game is played in rounds and each round consists of all characters taking all of their turns. Typically characters have only one turn which is called a *primary turn* but some characters have extra attacks which grant them a certain amount of *secondary turns*. In addition to these basic turn types there are also *interrupt*, *free interrupt* and *combo* turns. These are so-called opportunity turns, which may be taken if certain conditions are met and the character has turns left to carry out these (except for free interrupt which, as the name says, is free and does not consume any turns).

Turns are played out in initiative order and a round begins with determining initiative for each participant. Initiative is a combination of base initiative and a small random number for variance (suggested: 2-12). If two participants share the same initiative, the one with higher base initiative goes first. If they have same base initiatives as well, the one to go first is chosen randomly. If a participant has multiple turns, his initiative is divided into as many fractions as there are turns in such a way that primary is carried out at full initiative. The initiative for each turn is:

$$I_j = (N - j) / N * I$$

Where  $j$  is the turn number (0 for primary, 1 for first secondary etc) and  $N$  is the total number of turns.

Primary turn consists of three phases: movement, action and aftermath. Movement is always carried out first, as detailed in chapter 3. After movement the character may perform one action and finally if there's any post-attack options for that character, they are carried out. If the taken action was not an attack, then it consumes all of the character's secondary turns as well.

Secondary turns are kind of follow-up attacks and no movement is allowed unless the character has special movement skills which state otherwise (these will be covered in advanced rules). The character is allowed to turn ninety degrees before an attack but if there are no valid targets available, the attack sequence is broken and any further secondary turns are wasted. This is called loss of momentum. Some post-attack options can be carried out after secondary turns as well.

Interrupt turns are counter attacks which can be performed after defending against an attack with a large enough margin. Current suggestion is that the margin needs to be equal to or greater than the difference between the attacker's current initiative and the defender's next initiative. Unarmed martial artists can counter attacks easier, halving the required margin by using a reversal technique. The player always has an option not to take an interrupt turn since it does consume the character's next turn. Interrupt attacks can be guarded against normally. Post-attack options cannot be taken at the end of an interrupt turn.

A free interrupt turn occurs when a character makes a perfect defense. it works exactly like an interrupt turn but it does not consume any turns.

A combo turn can be taken if the previous attack was either a combo starter or a combo continuation attack. A combo turn is the most limited turn and it allows the character to make only specific attacks that link to the previous one, if any exist. Combo turns are carried out immediately after the previous turn and by using them a character can dish out all attacks in a fast sequence, possibly dealing massive damage. A combo requires commitment and if it is broken, all remaining secondary turns are lost. A combo is broken if any attack is defended against, or the target is killed or pushed out of range. A successful combo finisher returns the character to a normal position after which any remaining secondary turns can be carried out normally. Certain types of special movement can be taken between combo turns, allowing for rather wild assaults. For interrupt purposes are attacks during the combo are performed using the combo starter

initiative.

### 3. Movement

Character movement is affected by the average of their agility and endurance. Basic movement speed is six squares and it is modified according to the following table:

Average of agility + endurance	Movement modifier
1	-3
2	-2
3	-1
4-5	0
6-7	+1
7-10	+2
11+	+3

As stated earlier, movement range is counted as vertical or horizontal moves. Movement is affected by terrain which may either reduce movement (difficult ground) or prevent entry (walls etc). A *block zone* also stops movement if it is entered. A block zone is a three square area in front of a melee-capable character. Moving out of the block zone cannot be done with a normal move.

An *advance move* can be taken after a melee attack which successfully displaces the opponent by either incapacitating or forcing him out of the way. Basically, if the square that was attacked is free after the attack, the attacker may overtake that square with a one-square move. This is a post-attack option. An advance move is also possible after a ranged attack but only if the character has unused moves left since there's no benefit from the momentum of hectic close quarters combat.

A *retreat move* is the only way to escape a block zone. As the character has to walk backwards (in order not to turn his back on the enemy and get slashed), movement rate is halved. Also, the first move must be directly away

from the enemy, i.e. backwards. The remaining moves may be taken freely.

An *avoid move* can be taken after successfully defending against a ranged attack with a sufficient margin. This is a one square move to either side, where side means a direction across the attackers direction.

## 4. Ranged combat

This section covers all combat done by weapons that are clearly ranged, including firearms, bows, thrown weapons and spells. Typical attack options are *normal attack* and *risk attack*. An attack is always performed using the attacker's attack value and an appropriate weapon skill to determine to-hit value. An attack roll needs to go under this value. Typically this value is actually larger than the maximum attack roll (suggested random number between 2 and 12, weighted towards median. Simply: 2d6). To make use of this, the to-hit value is always decreased to the maximum attack roll value - 1 and any leftovers are transformed to a defense modifier, making the attack harder to avoid. The maximum attack roll always fails (suggested: 12, translates to about 2.78 % ) and the minimum is always a critical success (suggested: 2) which adds a -10 modifier to the defense roll and the attack, if it hits, causes double damage.

A risk attack is harder to hit with and harder to avoid but otherwise it works normally. What it does is, instead of decreasing the to-hit value to 11 (suggestion), it takes it down to 7 (suggestion again), which gives an additional -4 modifier to defend against that attack. This brings the hit-ratio to about 58.33%. (designer's note: we might make this sliding, so the player can determine the to-hit value as seen fit, in order to gain desired defense modifiers).

A ranged attack is typically defended against by *avoiding* but characters with shields may also *block* it instead. If the defense margin is greater than 5, the defender is allowed to make an avoid move. If it also exceeds interrupt margin, the defender is allowed to take an interrupt turn as well with a ranged attack against the attacker. A block defense does not allow these options, but it is easier. However, the damage is still applied, but the defender's shield protects him.

Characters may also defend others against ranged attacks. There are two ways to do this: *intercept* and *push* (for a lack of better term). Interception must always be done by blocking and it can be attempted whenever a ranged attack passes through the character's block zone (from the front, obviously). A push is an attempt to make the target avoid the attack but it puts the pusher in

danger of taking the hit. Furthermore, it is much more difficult (a table for modifiers to be inserted later, for now, just assume it's difficulty +2). The defender is moved to the target's square and if the margin of success was more than five, then neither is harmed – if less, the defender gets the hit. Any further attacks this turn against the target are redirected to the defender (he is assumed to successfully guard the target for now) but if he avoids them, the target is automatically hit.

## 5. Melee

Close quarters combat is divided into armed and unarmed. While there is no difference between attacks with weapons and unarmed *strike attacks*, unarmed combat also has options for *grappling* and *throws*. Basic mechanics for melee attacks are similar to those of ranged attacks, including risk attack option. Melee attacks on the other hand are usually not avoided, but *parried* or blocked. Again, in game terms the only difference between avoidance and parry is the latter's lack of an avoid move option. On the other hand, melee block does allow for interrupt option if conditions are met. Typically melee attacks can be directed against the first row in front of a character (diagonally left, forward, diagonally right) but some longer melee weapons allow characters to hit the second row as well. Unless otherwise stated, melee weapons can never attack through other characters.

Defending others in melee is not possible but block zones offer good amount of protection to characters hiding behind others as they are relatively hard to pass through. In order to protect weaker characters from melee opponents, they should be kept shielded behind defenders.

A *grab* is required to gain access to several unarmed options. A grappling attack is made normally, but it does not do any damage and it only indicates, that the character has successfully taken some kind of hold of the opponent and enters his square (this is one of the few occasions this may happen. Some characters pull the opponent to their's instead but the mechanic is not different). After this there are several options available.

*Throw* is an attempt to lift the opponent or put him off-balance and then use this advantage to throw him. Throw range depends on the throwing character's strength and the thrown character's weight (designer's note: a table will be presented later). Throw does normal damage, and might do additional damage if the thrown character hits solid objects or falls a significant distance. This may also cause momentary helplessness and leave the character open for

combos. Successful acrobatics check both decreases the damage and allows the character to remain alert.

*Pin or lock* basically disables the opponent for as long as the hold is continued and more damage can be inflicted each turn. The opponent does get a defense check against moving from grab to a pin but failing that they're helpless, and someone else needs to take the holding character off.

A character who is subject to a grab may try to break free, counter-grab or just try to attack the grabbing character. The last option however comes with a penalty. Attacking two grappling characters from the outside has to risk of hitting an ally in case of a failed attack and attacks are made at a penalty. However, once the situation becomes a lock or pin, it's static enough that others can easily pick targets and there's no penalty (failed attacks still hit the wrong target).

## 6. Defense

Defense is typically made of defense value and an appropriate defense skill. The aim is to get lower than this after all penalty modifiers have been applied. Another factor is defense capacity which indicates the character's ability to handle multiple attacks per round. If the amount of attacks exceed defense capacity, a cumulative penalty of -4 (suggestion) is applied every time. Sometimes overloading defense capacity of a good defender might be what's required to get some damage in.

Normal defense is either an avoid (in ranged) or a parry (in melee). Another option is block defense, which can be taken by characters with a shield or similar equipment. Instead of trying to avoid the attack, the character simply puts his shield in between, gaining a block bonus (+2). Unless the blocking character has deflection capability, damage is still applied but it starts with the shield, which might decrease it significantly. Some characters can deflect some attacks, which effectively gives them the block bonus for free, but all attacks cannot be deflected.

There are also *dedicated defense* and *panic defense* options. They are relatively similar and both rely on forfeiting any remaining attacks for a better defense. Dedicated defense is more powerful but it has to be declared as a primary action and it therefore always forfeits all attacks. In return, the character gains a +2 defense bonus for each forfeited attack. Panic defense is an on-spot version which can be taken in a sudden threatening situation. The option becomes

available, if the bonus for panic defense would be enough to stop an attack that would otherwise hit, and if taken, forfeits any remaining attacks for a +1 defense bonus each. In both cases the character remains in defensive position until next primary turn.

A *perfect defense* occurs when a defense check is critical. It has two advantages: 1) it doesn't use up the character's defense capacity and 2) it allows for a free interrupt turn.

## **7. Damage**

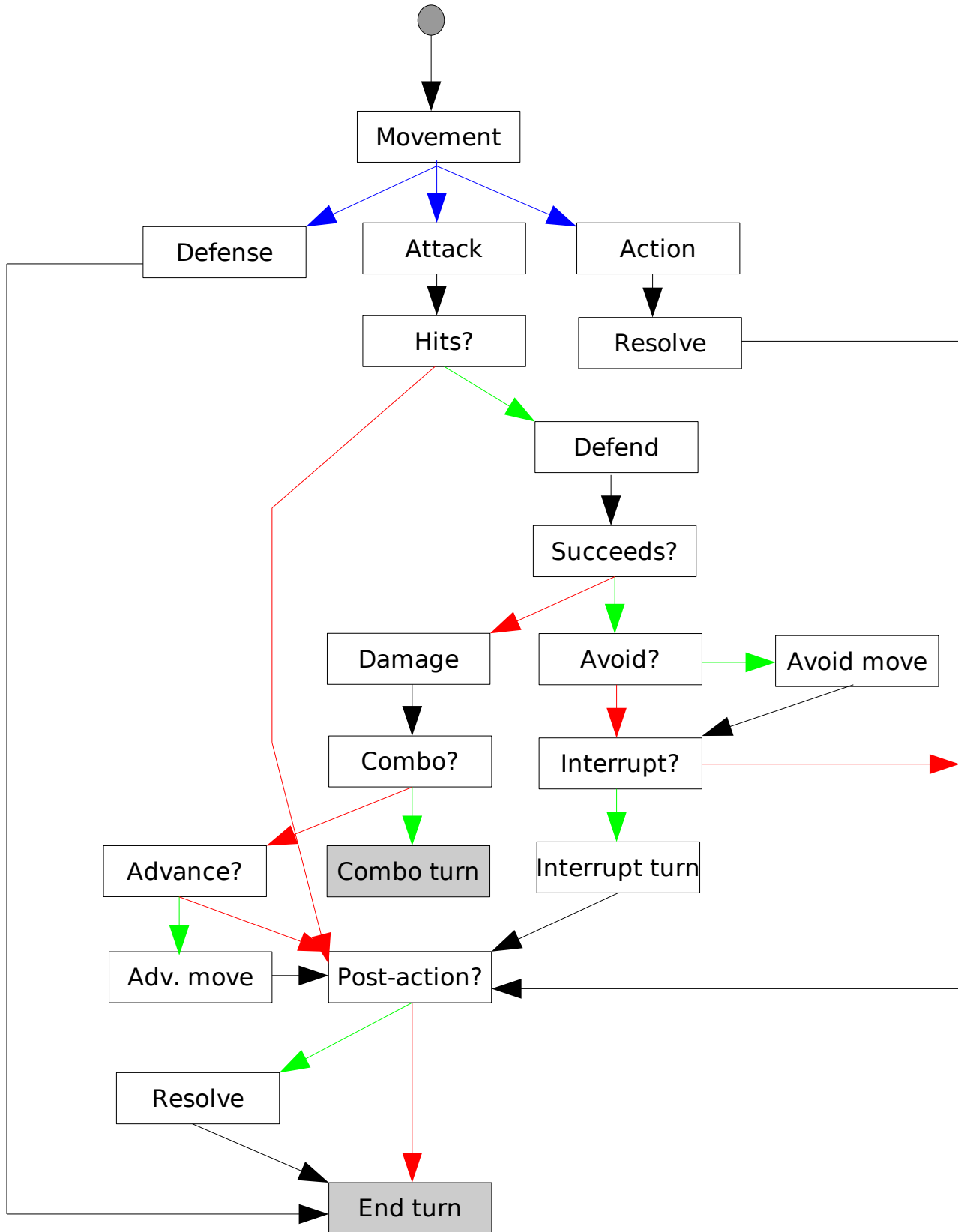
A successful attack does some damage. All attacks have minimum and maximum damage, and the actual amount is determined randomly between these, with weight towards the medium. In certain situations maximum damage is guaranteed but these will be a subject in later documents.

Before damage is applied to target's hit points, protection from armor or force fields etc is applied. The armor value is decreased from the final damage delivered. For force fields there are two different damage reduction schemes. If the force field is form-fitting, it functions like armor, decreasing the actual damage. However, a force bubble is more static and always takes maximum damage and then if there's any damage left after the force field reduction, the amount of actual damage is determined from that leftover damage as stated above.

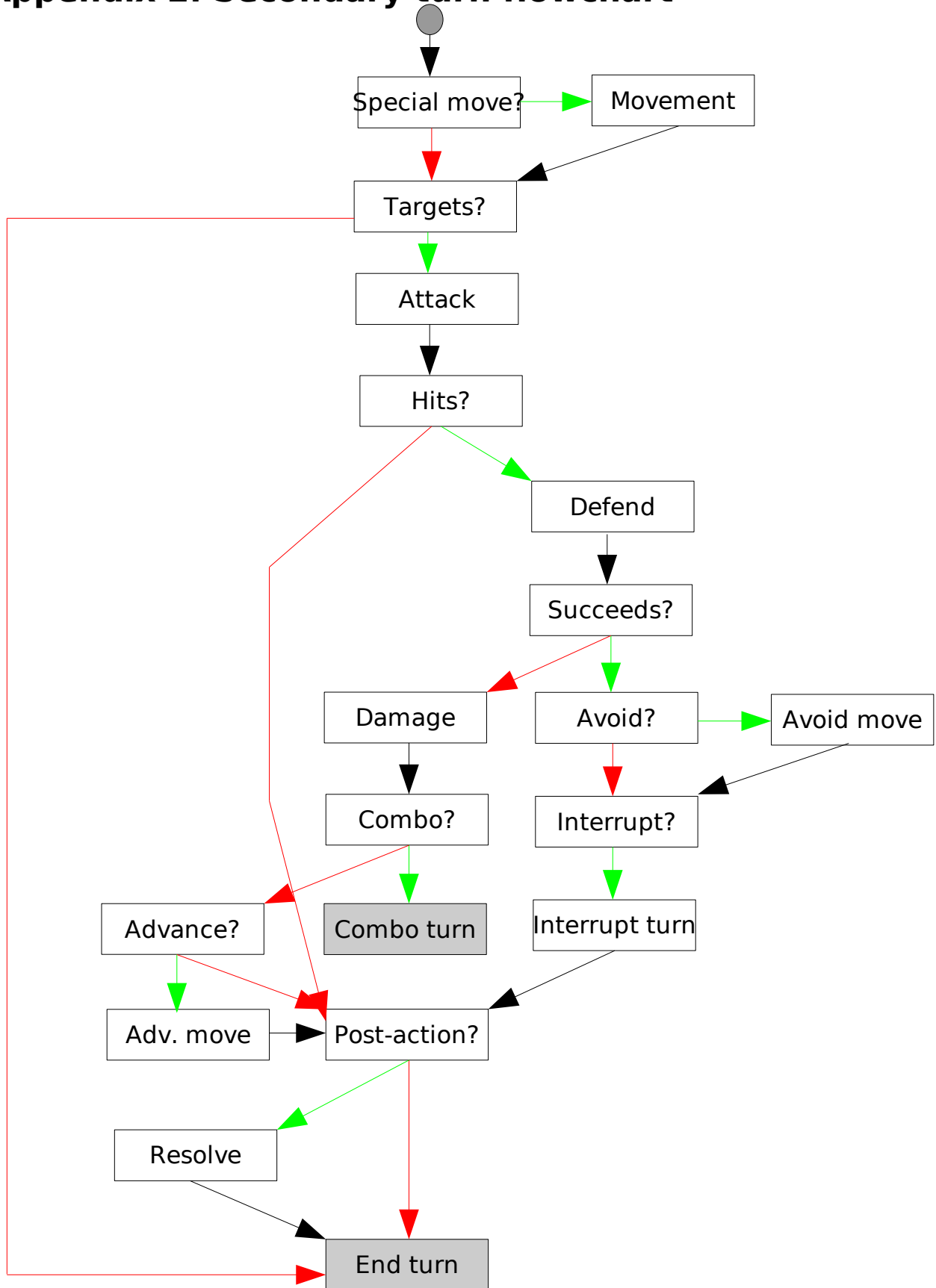
If the amount of damage exceeds the character's pain threshold, they may be dazed momentarily from the pain. A successful willpower roll will avoid this, but failure indicates a helpless state lasting as many rounds as was the margin of failure. Once a character drops below 50% HP, he becomes severely wounded and suffers penalties. Once below 10%, the character is in a critical state, suffering severe penalties. Below zero, the character is unconscious and once he hits below -20 HP, he's dead.



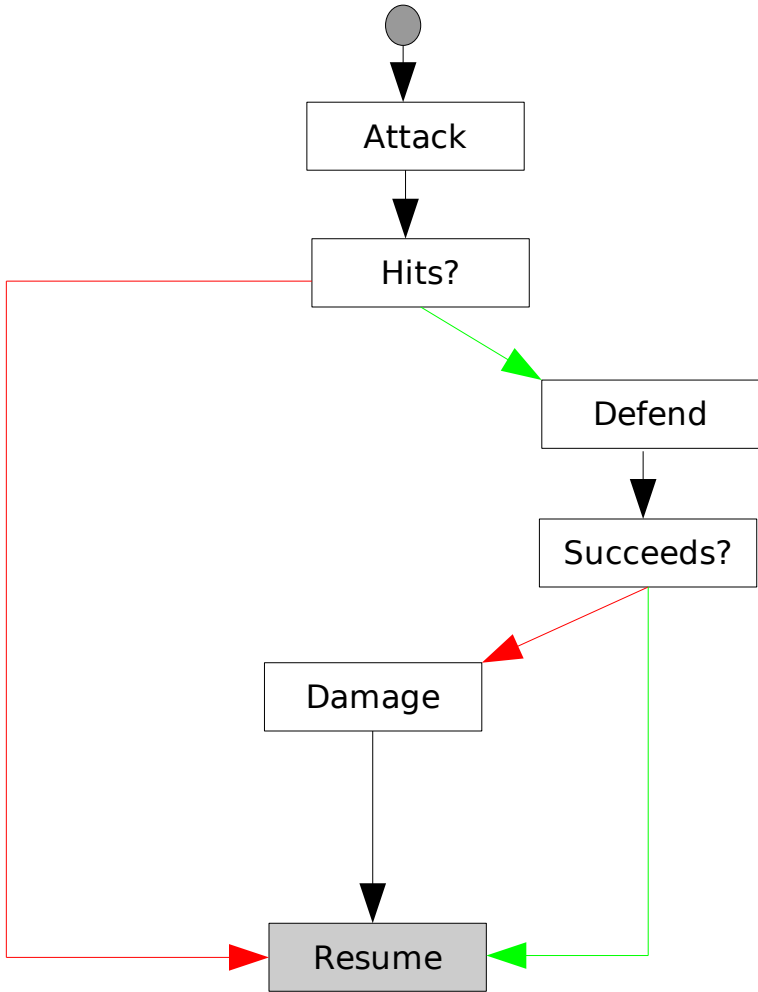
# Appendix 1: Primary turn flowchart



## Appendix 2: Secondary turn flowchart



# Appendix 3: Interrupt turn flowchart



## Appendix 4: Combo turn flowchart

