THE FORGE

A GENESYS RPG PODCAST

Episode 11 - The Fast and the Pharmaceutical

The Forge Podcast is all about bringing new creations to the table, and the Genesys RPG provides us all with a powerful set of tools to do so. When it comes to designing a setting, the Skills and Talents provided for players to use during character creation and while playing in the campaign, help players immerse themselves in the setting. The following are a series of rules both familiar and new that you can use in your campaign.

Die Casting (Skill: Medicine)

Aside from being the defacto skill for doctors and healers in the Genesys Role Playing Game, with its obvious uses, the *Medicine* skill has sadly been myopically pigeon-holed into a "just those uses" type skill by many players and GMs.

The *Medicine* skill is an essential one for any party to use regularly, but the sad truth is that due to the way the healing mechanics work in Genesys, the skill is rarely used in combat as painkillers are an easy option. Long-term damage consequences are all-too-frequently hand-waved away during down-time or "healed" with money spent at a hospital or temple. But, the *Medicine* skill is so much more and we hope in the following pages we can provide you with both creative ways, both according to rules and home-brewed, to give it more life in your games!

What is the Medicine skill?

The *Medicine* skill is a general skill found in the Genesys Core Rulebook on page 61, and is noted as the skill to perform healing or any other medically related procedures. Its use deals specifically with organic bodies, whether it be healing, modifying, and (in some cases) harming them.

The entry gives some solid examples of when to use the *Medicine* skill:

- Trying to heal wounds.
- Counteracting - or administering - a poison.
- Curing a disease.
- Creating a new pharmaceutical (or recreational) drug.
- Trying to heal a critical injury.
- Performing complex medical procedures (surgery, cybernetic augmentation, psychotherapy, etc.).

What's important to remember is that the *Medicine* skill covers more than healing. A good poisoner, for example, is going to have a good dice pool in Medicine. The book also provides some great examples of what Medicine is not used for:

- **Researching a disease or a poison:** There's a line between practice and research and *Medicine* is the practical skill. If you were examining a sick or poisoned person directly, you would use *Medicine*. But, researching in a laboratory or a library would require a *Knowledge* check.
- **Healing your own strain at the end of an encounter:** The rules clearly detail that if you're healing your own strain after an encounter, that's the domain of a *Cool* or *Discipline* check.
- **You try to administer poison through sleight of hand:** This includes dropping it unnoticed into food or drink, or surreptitiously injecting someone with it. If it's poison administration via subterfuge, this is where *Skulduggery* comes in. A good GM would probably allow *Medicine* with an increase in difficulty depending on the method of delivery, but *Skulduggery* is the primary skill in that situation.

WHO GETS MEDICINE?

- **Core Rules:** Healer, Mad Scientist, Priest.
- **Realms of Terrinoth:** Primalist, Scholar.
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:** Academic, Tech.

WHAT SPECIES USE MEDICINE?

There are no species that gain the use of the *Medicine* skill as either a bonus skill or in an ability that uses the skill.

WHAT TALENTS USE MEDICINE?

There are only three published talents to this point that even remotely deal with the *Medicine* skill:

- **Core Rules:** Surgeon (T1).
- **Realms of Terrinoth:** Pressure Point (T3).
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:** Combat Medicine (T2).

WHAT GEAR USES MEDICINE?

The following is a breakdown of the various items of gear used to heal or that use the *Medicine* skill in the GENESYS ROLE PLAYING GAME.

- **Painkiller (CRB p94):** A piece of gear that doesn't actually require or utilize the *Medicine* skill, which is actually the whole the point of it. However, it heals you so we should mention it for completion. It appears in each of the current setting books of REALMS OF TERRINOTH as a Health Elixir (p102) and SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK as a Slap-Patch (p100).
- **Herbs of Healing (CRB p146 and RoT p101):** For a fantasy setting, they add ☀ and ⋏ to a single *Medicine* check results when used.
- **First Aid Kit (CRB p162):** For the Weird War setting, it means you can heal wounds and critical injuries without penalties (eg. "Having the Proper Tools for the Job"). It appears as the Apothecary's Kit (RoT p100) in REALMS OF TERRINOTH.
- **Portable Med Kit (CRB p169):** For the modern settings, it means you can heal wounds and critical injuries without penalties (eg. "Having the Proper Tools for the Job") and it provides ⋏ to *Medicine* skill check results. This is duplicated as the Emergency Medkit (SotB p99) for SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK.
- **Portable Clinic Kit (SotB p99):** For the SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK setting, the "doc-bag" lets one use *Medicine* to heal without penalty (eg. "Having the Proper Tools for the Job"). Additionally it heals 1 extra wound and 1 extra strain when used on checks to heal.
- **Happy Patch (SotB p99):** For the SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK setting, this one isn't directly *Medicine* related, but is a drug with recovery properties - and worth mentioning. It heals 3 strain, but leaves you with the Disoriented condition until the end of the encounter.
- **Stim (SotB p99):** The Happy Patch's big brother, it instantly heals all strain, but the user suffers 10 Strain at the end of the encounter instead of recovering Strain through a *Cool* or *Discipline* check.

MECHANICAL EFFECTS

The *Medicine* skill is primarily used to heal. This is covered in the section at the very end of combat called Healing and Recovery (page 115) of the GENESYS CORE RULES. It's a fairly small section, but clearly shows that the *Medicine* skill is used in one of two ways.

- Short term healing.
- Healing Critical Injuries

SHORT TERM HEALING

Very simply, make a *Medicine* check with a difficulty based on how wounded the patient is:

- Less than half Wound Threshold - **Easy (♦)**.
- More than half Wound Threshold - **Average (♦♦)**.
- Over Wound Threshold - **Hard (♦♦♦)**

For every ☼ you regain 1 wound, and for every ⋏ you recover 1 Strain. The limitation here is that this check may only be performed once per encounter. In that scenario, the GM needs to decide what constitutes an "encounter" in their game. For example, travelling between two places. Is that a single encounter?

The only other limitation that applies to healing any injuries is that if you are performing the check on yourself, you increase the difficulty by 2.

HEALING CRITICAL INJURIES

The Critical Injury chart (page 115 CRB) has a column called "Severity". This is the difficulty to heal that particular critical injury. The limitation here is that a character can only attempt to heal a critical injury once per week per critical injury. A GM needs to determine how time effects their game.

SPENDING ☼, ⤫, ⋏, ⊗, ⌂, & ⊗

⋏ is covered in that it recovers Strain, but the remaining symbols are lacking in explanation. ⊗ can add additional wounds (our suggestion is 3). ⌂ can result in the check taking more time or causing strain to the target of the check or the healer themselves. ⊗ could result in a terrible accident causing a further critical injury to either the patient or healer. Needle-stick injuries are common in the medical profession. A negative reaction to an administered drug which narratively could result in the patient becoming addicted to that drug or highly allergic.

NON-STANDARD USES OF MEDICINE

There are several ways to use the *Medicine* skill within the standard rules:

MENTAL HEALTH

Phobias, and mental health issues caused specifically by fear and fear effects are dealt with by the *Medicine* skill. Within the Horror Tone (p244 CRB) the table entitled **TABLE III.4–2: TRAUMAS AND THEIR EFFECTS** lists various types of trauma, what effects they have, and the severity. This is, essentially, a Critical Injury table for Mental Trauma.

When a player rolls a ⊗ or ⌂⌂⌂⌂⌂ on a Fear check for their character, they may receive a Critical Injury. Roll on the Critical Injury table as you would normally, find the severity, then compare that result to the one listed in this table with the corresponding severity. This effect is then applied to the character that fails the fear check.

CURING MENTAL TRAUMA

Although there is no mention of how to cure a Mental Trauma, our suggestion is to use the *Medicine* skill. *Medicine* covers all aspects of the medical profession, including psychology and psychiatry. Yet, in a setting where fear plays a significant role, you may consider creating an *Intellect* or *Presence* based skill specifically for this purpose called *Psychology*. However, in a standard setting, *Medicine* seems the best skill to use, perhaps coupled with the *Presence* attribute.

The difficulty to cure a trauma is based on the severity like any other Critical Injury. Our suggestion of how long it takes to treat this condition is one month per severity level. However, the decision is going to be left to the GM depending on the nature of the trauma and how soon until the patient is exposed to what caused the trauma. If you want to take a look at an expansion to the rules about Fear, consider purchasing Scott Zumwalt's **EXPANDED FEAR GUIDELINES** supplement available on the Genesys Foundry.

Psychology is not something one can perform with tools - although Psychiatry often used lobotomies in days gone by and even to this day uses electro-shock therapy. The knowledge of how to deal with mental health injuries comes from experience and training. All doctors, for example, must perform duties in mental health facilities during their training, so depending on the character's backstory, a GM may wish to introduce several ■ to a *Medicine* check to represent a character's lack of experience in that field.

FORENSICS

Games focused on investigation and crime, or even the occasional crime or investigation focused session, can use *Medicine* as a forensics skill. Although its limitations shouldn't extend beyond examining "bodies" or "remains" for clues to determine cause and time of death, it can expand its reach for clever players. Blood splatter patterns and murder weapon identification are two examples of how the *Medicine* skill could offer further insight into an investigation.

TALENTS

The easiest non-standard use of the Medicine skill is throught the use of custom talents designed specifically for your setting. Since there are only three talents spread across all of the core rules and setting books that utilise the Medicine skill, or relate to it in some way, we created four brand new talents for those anatomical eggheads:

INVIGORATING PAINKILLER

Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No.

When your character administers a painkiller, in addition to the normal effects of the painkiller, the target also recovers a number of strain. That number is equal to your character's ranks in the Medicine skill.

SURGICAL STRIKE

Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No

Before your character makes a Brawl or Melee (Light) check, you may spend a Story Point as an incidental to grant your attack the Vicious quality equal to your ranks in Medicine. If the attack already has the Vicious quality, it is increased by your ranks in Medicine.

IT'S ONLY A FLESH WOUND

Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No

Once per session, when a character within short range suffers a critical injury, your character may attempt a **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Medicine check**. If successful, your character selects the critical injury suffered, in lieu of the rolled result.

CRASH CART

Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No

Once per session, your character can spend a story point to attempt a **Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆) Medicine check** targeting an engaged character who has died within the last round. If successful, the target character is saved, returning to life at one wound above their wound threshold.

THE FURNACE (ATTRIBUTES: AGILITY)

When it comes to creating your own setting or world in Genesys or perhaps expanding upon an existing setting, one of the very first things that often comes to mind for GMs and players is archetypes and species.

Whether it's specialized humans (archetypes) who embody classic tropes or genuine species of diverse appearance and ability who populate your fantasy and sci-fi settings, the archetypes and species available for players to select go a long way to imparting the tone and feeling of your game.

However, the choice of attributes is an important decision made during the creation process, and in a series of episodes on crafting archetypes and species-games we've explored the attributes of *Brawn* (Episode 4), *Willpower* (Episode 7), and *Cunning* (Episode 9). In Episode 11, however, we covered the attribute of *Agility*. The hosts then developed two playable species, namely the **Navigator** and the **Speedster**. Those two species are below for use in your games.

ARCHETYPE: THE NAVIGATORS

The Navigators are a species without a home, living nomadically and constantly on the move in large clan groups. However, they do not seek a home and claim to have lost all record of their original place of origin. Culturally devoted to exploration above all else, the Navigators remain focused on travel, discovering new places, and reaching the most far-flung reaches of settled regions. No matter where you go, you'll almost always find traces that a Navigator has visited there first.

This species moves and lives in migrant fleets (Sci-Fi or Space Opera setting) or large caravans (Fantasy setting). In either case, it is common for solo "journeys of exploration" to act as a right of passage for young adults. A lithe species with two sets of arms, they are fast talkers with fast metabolisms, notoriously unable to sit still or even remain in one place for very long.

1	3	2	2	2	1
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 12 + Brawn

- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower

- **Starting Experience:** 90

- **Starting Skills:** A Navigator starts with one rank in Astrocartography (Sci-fi or Space Opera setting) or Knowledge (Geography) (Fantasy), and one rank in Negotiation during character creation. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and may not increase these skills above rank 2 during character creation.

- **Extra Limbs:** Your character may downgrade their action to a maneuver on their turn, even if they have already taken two maneuvers that turn. This "extra maneuver" costs an additional 2 strain.

- **Fast Metabolism:** Your character does not need to sleep, and gains the benefits of a full night's rest with an hour of quiet contemplation.

ARCHETYPE: The Speedster

As fast as lightning, the Speedster hero moves from place to place, righting wrongs in the name of justice. While many heroes fly or move about in high-tech gear, the Speedster is capable of great exploits using the power of momentum generated by their speed. Seemingly ignoring the laws of physics, Speedsters often run across water, up vertical inclines, and even through the air when precipitation is present. Yet, the Speedster's power comes from their overcharged metabolism which in turn is their greatest weakness.

With their immense hunger, Speedsters often seek out allies, sponsors, and other super groups to help keep them sustained with much needed resources. Unfortunately, many Speedsters turn to a life of crime out of necessity, a shame they often carry for the rest of their careers.

The power possessed by a Speedster isn't limited to their faster-than-normal movement. Rapid punches, whirlwinds, and even time travel are all possible. Unfortunately, many a Speedster has vanished; lost to the dangers of other dimensions and space-time itself. It is for this reason that Speedsters must constantly hone their skills to master these astonishing feats.

2	3	2	2	2	1
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 12 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 110
- **Starting Skills:** A Speedster starts with one rank in Athletics during character creation. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and may not increase that skill above rank 3 during character creation.

- **Fleet of Foot:** You can perform a second maneuver to move without suffering strain. You still cannot exceed the limitation of two maneuvers in a turn.

- **Burst of Speed:** Once per encounter, as an action, your character may spend 4 strain to move anywhere within Long range.

- **Increased Metabolism:** Your character only requires an hour of sleep to gain the benefits of a full night's rest. Additionally, you double any wounds recovered through natural healing, and at the end of an encounter, when attempting to recover strain, your character recovers an extra 2 strain.

- **Need for Sustenance:** Your character requires additional sustenance to maintain their abilities. If they do not consume the equivalent of 10 times the normal amount of food required by an average human, they must increase the difficulty of all skill checks twice and lose access to Fleet of Foot, Burst of Speed, and Increased Metabolism.

We recommend playtesting the contents of this document before using them in your game. Feedback is always appreciated. You can contact use via e-mail at forgegenesys@ d20radio.com or through any of our social media channels by searching @forgegenesys.

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