Core Mechanics

- Checks
- Catch Your Breath
- Loot Checks
- Backpack
- Stunts
- Stress

Checks

When you attempt something risky or challenging, you make a **check** to see how it plays out. If an action isn't risky, you simply succeed—no roll needed.

The GM telegraphs the risk before you roll. Then:

1. **Pick a skill** that matches what you're doing
2. **Roll the die** matching that skill's current rating
3. **Interpret the result:**

- **1-2:** You **fail**, and there's an additional **complication**
- **3-4:** You **succeed**, but there's a **complication**
- **5+:** You **succeed**. The higher the roll, the better

After rolling, reduce the skill's die rating by one step: d12 → d10 → d8 → d6 → d4. Skills cannot go lower than d4.

Group Checks

If an ally helps you, they also make a check, but they share the same risks and consequences. Both of you reduce your skill ratings. Take the highest die result.

Complications

Complications are how Duskara pushes back. They might be:

- A superstorm intensifies, forcing you to seek immediate shelter
- A predator detects your heat signature
- Your water supply is contaminated
- A rival faction notices your activity
- A geothermal vent shows signs of instability
- Psychic feedback causes disorientation

Complications escalate tension and often lead to **stress**.

Catch Your Breath

To reset all your **skills** to their original ratings, you can **catch your breath**. This is a brief respite in tension—finding shelter during a storm, taking cover in ruins, resting at a settlement.

Catching your breath can be done at any time, even during combat or crisis.

When you catch your breath, the GM looks at the scene and introduces a **new complication** for the group. The world doesn't wait while you rest.

Example Complications (GM picks or rolls on table in Section 5):

- Bandits arrive, attracted by your campfire
- The superstorm shifts course toward your position
- A water cache you were counting on has been sabotaged
- A psychic aberration manifests nearby
- A geothermal vent in your shelter begins to destabilize
- You're discovered by a hostile settlement patrol

Loot Checks

When the fiction allows it—scavenging ruins, salvaging day-side mining drones, looting abandoned settlements—you can make a **loot check**.

You start with a **d12 loot die**, which steps down after each use. You may continue using it at d4, but at your own risk. To reset your loot die, you must **catch your breath**.

Roll your current loot die and interpret the result:

- **1-2:** Trouble is here… (immediate threat manifests)
- **3-4:** There's trouble ahead… (danger is approaching)
- **5-6:** You find a **d6 item**
- **7-8:** You find a **d8 item**
- **9-10:** You find a **d10 item** or a **med kit**
- **11-12:** You find a **d12 item** or a **med kit**

Backpack

Items in your backpack can be used instead of skills for checks. They start with a die rating (d6, d8, d10, or d12) and degrade with use, just like skills.

When an item is reduced to **d4**, it either breaks, gets lost, or becomes irrelevant to the fiction. You can carry **3 items** and **1 med kit** at a time.

Med kits are special items that clear **2 stress** when used. They don't degrade—they're consumed entirely.

Stunts

When you attempt something extraordinary—a **stunt**—you roll a **d12** instead of your skill rating.

Stunts represent heroic psychic feats, desperate gambits, or acts of ingenuity under pressure:

- Channeling weather working to redirect a superstorm
- Shadow-walking through the Deep Roads to bypass a collapse
- Deep-bonding with a wind serpent to intimidate bandits
- Using thermal sense to find a hidden geothermal vent

After attempting a stunt, you must catch your breath before attempting another.

Stress

When you face complications, you may take **stress**. Stress represents physical exhaustion, psychic burnout, environmental exposure, or psychological strain.

Track stress with boxes or tally marks. If you reach **4 stress**, your character becomes **vulnerable**—failing a dangerous check could mean being taken out or sudden death.

Clearing Stress:

- Use a **med kit** to clear **2 stress**
- Rest in a secure location (settlement, fortified shelter) to clear an amount at the GM's discretion
- Narrative recovery (psychic counseling, geothermal rest chambers, communal support)