

# Diceless Risus

- P.2 The pretentious edition (Intro)**
  - Credits**Character Creation**
  - Basics
- P.3 For your inspiration (Sample clichés)****Game System**
  - Target numbers
- P.4 The bidding system**
- P.5 Modifiers**
  - Tools
  - Assistance
  - Circumstantial
  - Role-play
  - Bribe
- P.6 Optional rules****Character cliché**
  - Anatomy of a cliché**Fluid clichés****Optional rule #58.3 (What makes you, you!)**
- P.7**
  - Types**Equipment**
  - Mundane & magic
  - Gadgetry
  - Magic items
- P.8 Advantages****Disadvantages**
- P.9 Powers**
  - Magic
  - Super powers**Character progression (And what have we learned today?)**
- P.10**
  - Points
  - Progression cost**Example of play session****Managing Play**
  - Format of a Diceless Risus play
- P.11**
  - Turn of play
  - Arguments & subjectivity
  - Abuse & repetition
  - Preparation & adventures**Additional Rules**
- P.12 Final words**
- P.13 Character sheets**
  - Fancy
  - Scribbled
  - Short

# Diceless Risus:

## The PRECENCIOS Edition

**Diceless Risus** is a complete, rules-lite Role Playing Game (RPG) designed to provide an acting-focused gaming experience. It is especially valuable to GMs who value role playing over dice-rolling but want a quick, simple system for conventions, or any late-night beer-and-pretzels night. But it also a great tool to introduce new players into the world of Role Playing Games. While Risus is essentially a Universal Comedy System, Diceless Risus works better for more serious play-acting. Best of all, a Risus character takes about 20-30 seconds to create!

### Credit where credit is due

Inspiration for this optional version of the Risus game system comes from sources such as Amber and White Wolf's Live Action Role-Playing games, GURPS (and the original Risus game of course).

## CHARACTER CREATION:

Characters in Diceless Risus are still defined by clichés. But now they are split into two groups: **Innate clichés** (Stats) and **Learned clichés** (Skills).

Human maximum for any one cliché should be 5 points. Beginners' clichés shouldn't exceed 4 points.

Clichés describe what a character is (Innate) and what he knows or can do (Learned). You can choose cliché abilities associated with Warriors, Rangers, Wizards or Hobbits, or more modern ones like Spy, Computer geek or Adam West (once an actor, now just a cliché).

Unlike regular Risus, the clichés (Stats & Skills) are not defined in terms of dice but in terms of points. The number of points they have represents the numbers you add up to find how good you are at doing something. The total of one **Innate cliché** plus one other **Learned cliché** represent how well you perform a task. In Diceless Risus, a total of two points is a putz, four is talented, six is professional and eight is mastery.

### Basics

The GM assigns **Innate Clichés**: the number and names of which varies to his whim / game style.

-The player is given a total of 2.5 points / stat to spend on them (on average).

*Examples of Innate Clichés:* "Strength" "Smarts" "Motormouth"

The Player comes up with **Learned Clichés**: stuff his character knows / can do.

-The player is given twice the amount of points of Innate clichés to share among them.

*Examples of Learned Clichés:* "Driving" "Brawling" "Cruising" "Handling booze"

**Why two sets of clichés? Regular Risus lets the player pick all his clichés.**

Because the diceless system is a little static (no randomness: the highest total wins), it helps to be able to combine different scores in new manners to reach a better total and win a contest. (Maybe you can use your *Smarts* instead of your *Motormouth* innate cliché when trying to seduce a professor).

### The number of Innate clichés can vary according to the game

A "Toon" game might have 'BULK' and 'BRAINS' as the only Innate Clichés.

But a fantasy game might have four stats: 'Strength' 'Dexterity' 'Intelligence' and 'Presence' for example. A GM can make up whatever Innate Clichés are appropriate to the game.

### The name of the game

Learned Clichés can be named as the player wishes (mostly words that end with "-ing"). Of course they must meet the GM's setting and his approval. "Smash Things" can be just as good as "Fighting". One might be more appropriate for Hulk than Adam West.

The GM gives the player a description of the game world he is going to play in: Sword and sorcery, Space opera, Horror etc. Then the player writes up his character concept accordingly.

Characters are created by naming and describing them and listing their clichés.

**Example:** The GM says “The game takes place in a survival-first post-apocalyptic world.”

And gives him 3 **Innate Clichés: Strength, Smarts & Motormouth.**

From that the **player** creates a “Road warrior” concept:

“An ace driver who likes to fight, score with chicks and is often drunk” From this he writes up his **Learned Clichés. (Driving, Brawling, Cruising, Handling booze & Belching)**

He then looks over the **Innate clichés.**

First the GM tells him he has 8 points to spend among them (a little over 2.5 on average). He puts 4 in ‘Strength’, 2 in ‘Smarts’ and 2 in ‘Motormouth’.

Second, he is given 16 points to spend in **Learned Clichés** (double the points for Innate clichés).

Like so: Driving [4] Brawling [3] Cruising women [3] Handling booze [2] Belching [2].

He then decides to make up another skill for his remaining 2 points: “Looking cool on the road”.

### For your inspiration

#### Some Sample Innate Clichés

**Strength, Force, Power, Body, Bullyness  
Dexterity, Agility, Speed, Weasel factor  
Intelligence, Reason, Wits, Brains, Noggin  
Charisma, Presence, Looks, Sex appeal, Smarminess  
Wisdom, Intuition, Smarts, Savvy, 6<sup>th</sup> sense  
Willpower, Chutzpah, Guts, Luck, The Devil**

#### Some Sample Learned Clichés

**Astronaut** (Piloting spaceships, engineering, astronomy, not puking in zero-gee)  
**Barbarian** (Brawling, sailing, climbing, drinking, whoring, grunting, sweating)  
**Bimbo** (Seducing, fashion design, signing, dancing, teasing, not teasing...)  
**Computer Geek** (Hacking, programming, trivia knowledge, fumbling over introductions)  
**Con Artist** (Bluffing, lying, accounting, evading cops)  
**Cowboy** (Ridin', ropin', brandin', spittin', and shootin')  
**Gadgeteer** (Math, mechanics, foraging, building a radar out of a bent fork and some gum)  
**Gambler** (Betting, cheating, counting, intimidating, running very fast)  
**Geezer** (History, administration, wheezin', cursin', bitter reminiscin', failin' to understand kids)  
**Kid** (Spotting, searching, hiding, listening, being a sidekick, making friends with Giant Monsters)  
**Knight** (Riding, lancing, sword-swinging, heraldry, being chaste)

**Mad Scientist** (Electricity, chemistry, biology, raving, world-domination, trying to play God)

**Martial Artist** (Tae-kwon-do, jumping, acrobatics, out-of-synch speech)

**Sorcerer** (Casting fire spells, occult, alchemy, demon-summoning, speaking in tongues)

**Outdoorsman** (Survival, tracking, fauna & flora lore, building shelters, finding wild food)

## Game System

When attempting to do something:

**Innate Cliché + Learned Cliché = Total**

The total must beat a Target Number or an opponent's Innate cliché + Learned cliché.

### The highest number wins.

**Whoever loses reduces by 1 point the Innate Cliché he used in the contest.**

If any cliché reaches 0 you are down, KO, paralyzed, dead, stupefied etc. Depending on the cliché

Draws could result in partial success. (At the GM's discretion)

**Example:**

**GM** “Your Strength + Brawling total is 4 and BIG boss' total is 6. You fight hand to hand with Big Boss. You get a couple of swings, his head goes left and right...but even your best punches don't faze him. He looks at you and grins. He throws a lightning-fast punch that sends you flying through the plastered wall.” (Deduct 1 from your Strength.)

**Player** “Huh-ho. He's too tough for me: and now I'm in a bad a shape. I have to get out of here.”

In contest against things/problems, the GM assigns a Target Number for the difficulty.

## Target Numbers:

**2: A cinch. A challenge for a schmuck.**

**4: Routine for a pro.**

**6: A challenge for a pro.**

**8: Routine for a hero. Inventive/tricky stunt.**

**10: A heroic challenge.**

**12: A challenge for a Master.**

**16: Nearly superhuman difficulty.**

**20: Actual superhuman difficulty.**

**Player** “My total to break the exit door is 4 (my Strength plus Brawling).”

**GM** “The door has a break target of 6. You keep smashing into it but it doesn't break down.”

### What Innate cliché do I add with what Learned cliché?

The GM decides that and it can vary according to the situation. He can either:

- 1- **Ask for a specific combination of clichés. If he knows what you have on your character sheet.**
- 2- **Ask the \*player\* to tell what cliché he think he can use. This may require some debate.**  
Can't succeed in that contest?  
Try to change the situation or convince the GM that you could use a different cliché.

#### Example:

**Player** "I try to hack into the computer system."

**GM** "Add **Smarts** plus **Computer**"

**Player** "That's 1 + 2. The total is 3."

**GM** "Bah! No way you can get in. Try to beat a 5."

**Player** "Damn! I smack the computer!"

**GM** "Real mature."

**Player** "Does it work?"

**GM** "Huh?"

**Player** "You know my character is no genius. Sometimes machines work when you punch them. I'm good at that."

**GM** "Ha-ha! Funny but true. Okay: I'll let you use **Strength** plus **Computer**."

**Player** "Can I use **Strength** plus **Brawling** instead?"

**GM** "Don't push it monkey boy!"

**Note:** **Funny shticks clichés** are good because you can easily make up funky uses for them. Maybe the Learned cliché "Knows drinking games" can be used instead of other social clichés with frat boys and bar pillars. "Adam West" might justify odd camera angles.

You can also try to convince the GM that some **Learned Clichés** can be applied to effects he might not have considered. See **Modifiers** (Role-playing) below.

#### Example:

**GM** "You don't have any computer skills. So you can only use your **Smarts** cliché as a total for hacking."

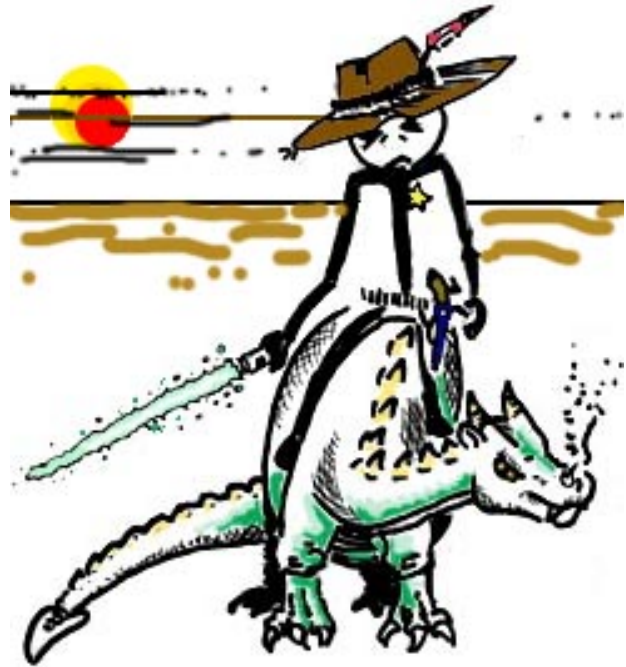
**Player** "Hey wait, how about my 'Security' **Learned cliché**. Couldn't I use that?"

**GM** "How can you justify that?"

**Player** "Well almost all security works with electronics and computer: I am bound to know a lot about that. I can also try to get information on computer security on the net."

**GM** "That's pretty reasonable. I'll allow it."

*The GM might choose to reduce new totals if he feels the combination is a stretch.*



This is kind of a static, win or loose system...no?

Enter:

## The Bidding System

You can make extra effort, pull a muscle, cram very hard, show some guts etc:

Bid extra points to increase your total.

You can add as many points as you have in your total to get a "critical success".

But every point you add is lost from your total for the game on any next move you make.

**Unlike in a normal contest, when you bid you can deduct the points in any cliché you want (Bright people usually pick Learned ones.)**

#### Example:

**Player** "My total to break the exit door is 4 (my **Strength** plus **Brawling**)."

**GM** "The door has a break target of 6."

**Player** "Okay. I bet an additional 2 points."

**GM** "You smash it once, it doesn't break. You take a run at it, dislocate your shoulder, and break it down."  
"Loose 2 points from your total."

**Player** "Ouch! Do I loose **Innate cliché** or **Learned cliché** points?"

**GM** "Wherever you want. But **Innate clichés** can be used with every other **Learned cliché**."

**Player** "Making them much more useful. So I will remove 2 points from **Brawling**. Next fight is going to be hard"

# Modifiers

Throughout the game players (and the GM) are expected to imagine ways to beat a superior opponent.

You might think "Hey, without dice, if I don't a high enough total, I can't do a thing!" Yes and no. Your ability to role-play is your dice. You can get the upper hand on a challenge that is too difficult by manipulating the situation. Not strong enough? Convince someone to help you. No way you could take the Cardinal's place at the court? Stir up a scandal by exposing his affair.

## 1- Tools:

Tools are the most common way to get the upper hand. Players are assumed to have all the proper tools to do their profession. An accountant might be able to gain a bonus to his fighting ability by picking up a stapler, but a warrior is expected to be carrying around a sword and gains no bonus from it. It is assumed that, whatever fighting score they have, it encompasses their gear.

**Hint:** if the character doesn't have the appropriate Learned Cliché...he probably doesn't have the tools on him/herself.

### Examples of Modifiers

Spoon, pea shooter, rubber chicken	+1
Small arms, sword, wrench	+2
Big-ass sword, table, handgun	+3
Laser pistol, anvil, machine gun	+4
Death ray, bulldozer, airplane food	+5

Those are only examples of weapons or combat-oriented tools. They serve as a gauge on how to assign bonuses. In other situations a "Maximus logger 3000" industrial printer could give you a +5 bonus to hand your paper on time for the finals.

**Remember:** The GM assigns all modifiers. He is not expected to be fair but expected to create a fun ambiance (which may require him to be fair for the enjoyment of all...most of the time.)

## 2- Assistance:

*"I can't beat the school bully alone. So I try to enlist all the 1<sup>st</sup> graders to help me."*

Probably one of the most obvious or easiest idea players can come up with. If overused the GM may feel the players' lack of imagination will only lead them to find more opponents to bash their heads in.

Only certain tasks can be accomplished with assistance and the GM is expected to use common sense when determining if a situation warrants it.

A quick way to calculate group effort would be to use the highest appropriate cliché total and add +1 to it for every person helping.

In some instance maybe there can be a maximum bonus or number of people who can help. Or the GM may assign a lower value for additional help.

### # of helpers less significant:

**X 2 number of 'helpers' / +1** (1, 2, 4, 8, 16)

### Helpers not skilled for contest:

**-Set a maximum to the modifier**

**Or**

**-Ask player to role-play help for a +1 bonus**

## 3- Circumstantial:

The player (or GM) can call on or create events that benefit or diminish a total score.

The Gm decides how much bonus he gives according to how much work was put into creating the circumstance or how imaginative the player is in pointing out the benefit. Often that means the player has to argue his point of view on how the conditions benefit him.

**Example:** "After a lengthy investigation, I expose the Cardinal's affair in front of the whole court! Surely now I will be able to challenge him publicly."

**Or:** Loosing the race? "May I remind you that we are in my hometown? I have my fan club in the stands cheering for me and they might give me the moral boost I need to win."

## 4- Role-play:

Gm should give additional points for good role-play: coming up with one-liners and acting out their actions. Of course these must help solve or fit the contest. "As I lay my hands on him and cast my death spell, I shout to the evil priest; *Your God cannot help you now!!*"

Acting in character	+1
Good one-liner, habit or quirk fitting the situation	+2
Creative stunt, imaginative plan, drama	+3
Acting in character against self-interest	+4
Acting in character against self-preservation	+5

## 5- Bribe:

Offering some nachos to your GM can earn you some brownie points. Use it often.



## Anatomy of a Cliché

The Risus Companion © has a good review on the anatomy of what constitutes a cliché. Think on what you can include when making all your clichés.

<b>Profession</b>	Private eye, attorney
<b>Race / species</b>	Asian, elf
<b>Culture</b>	European, Hyperborean
<b>Personal history</b>	Ex-con, formerly known as-
<b>Religion</b>	New born, fanatic, Zen
<b>Social class</b>	Dilettante, beggar,
<b>Gender</b>	Male, nurse, confused
<b>Group affiliation</b>	Freemason, scout
<b>Demeanour</b>	Cheerful, shy, grim
<b>Appearance</b>	Cute, ugly, dirty
<b>Ham-handed references</b>	Top Gun, Adam West
<b>Goals</b>	World domination
<b>Self-image</b>	Frustrated, egomaniac
<b>Problems</b>	Blind, lecherous

# Optional Rules

## Character Cliché

Archetypes come in many colors. The original Risus game suggested character concepts as a cliché. From the The Mad scientist bent on world domination to the Fashionably Gay Interior Designer or Adam West.

This is the all-encompassing cliché that defines a character. In a way it is their “level”, the gauge that defines how good they are at being . . . who they are.

Players could write their concept up as the cliché. In our previous example the character’s cliché could be “Ace Driver” or “Womanizing Ace Driver”. This cliché is given 1 point at the first game. The cliché’s point(s) can be used to boost any contest that is within his expertise, his turf (see Bidding). Every game where they succeeded in role-playing their character well the GM can give them 1 point to add to its value.

Essentially, this works like the **Fluid Clichés**. (See next chapter.)

## Fluid Clichés

### “Willpower, Luck, Magic, Chutzpah”

Make an **Innate Cliché** that can add one-time points to a single contest. Like a universal blood donor for contests. Points used are lost. Replenish the points at the next game. If he uses them too early the player is out of points for the last showdown.

These can represent an ability to adapt to various situations and offer more options to players.

### Optional rule #58.3:

### What makes you, you!

There is several ways to give additional “humph” to a character. Heroes have nifty gadgets, friends, money and flaws. If it is assumed the warrior has a sword in his basic equipment, why is he looking for the sword of Jake? Sure you are a rock star, but where are your fans? Saying “I am a model” is nice, but where does it show on the gaming table?

The GM allows **3 points** that can be moved from the **Learned Clichés** into buying Options. Only 3 points, **total**, can be moved by starting characters: given or taken.

Those options are:

- **Equipment**
- **Advantages**
- **Disadvantages**
- **Powers**

### How to manage unique abilities or tools:

- 1- Give them a bonus to add on some totals (permanent or temporary)
- 2- Have them cost some Innate or Learned character points. (If used at PC's creation)
- 3- Assign "types" to them: limits their use and gives specific benefits. ('Ranged' or 'Hand')

### Types?

"What is a type?"

Again: a new rule? Well, not really. Types are just key words you associate with things, they define what the object does. Having a gun against a guy with a knife may not make a difference during a regular contest. But if he's on the other side of a highway with passing cars, most likely you can claim you are the only one who can hurt him. **They are clichés but apply to objects.**

Types allows the player to lay claim an upper hand in certain situations / contests. They are also like a voucher that clearly states that what you have can do this or that.

## • Equipment

As said in the 'Tools' chapter, equipment is assigned a value according to their usefulness, efficiency or power to solve a contest.

What players buy with equipment is twofold: a bonus to their total and Types. A 'Type' basically describes whatever that thing does that most others don't. In other words Type gives a **circumstantial** bonus. A typical sword (+2 Value) can have the Type 'Slashing' but a typical gun (+2 also) has 'Ranged'. One may act first from a distance but the other can cut rope.

### Mundane & Magic equipment

#### +1 Bonus Value

Shoddy items, cheap, barely adequate for the job

Object	Type
Rubber gloves to climb walls	Sticky
Microsoft	Clunky
Rubber chicken as comedy prop	Clucky

#### +2 Bonus Value

Common items, do the job well, affordable

Object	Type
Hand weapons (swords)	Close, slashing
Guns & rifles	Ranged, charges
Tool kit	Specialized, solid

#### +3 Bonus Value

Finely crafted items, expensive, professional tools

Object	Type
Locksmith key set	Breaking & entering
M-16 with telescopic sight	Precise

#### +4 Bonus Value

Rare objects, master craftsmanship, world-class

Object	Type
Spy kit	High tech
Wand of fireball	Bring fiery death

#### +5 Bonus Value

Unique items, outrageously expensive, best ever

Object	Type
Stradivarius	Melodic, status
The one ring	Rules them all

**Note:** GMs might want to handle Magic items differently and come up with special rules. Other equipment like super-technology (death rays, teleporter), normal but really expensive stuff (manor, helicopter) could be covered within the normal equipment rules or require special rules too.

### Gadgetry

The player can always have, on the spot, the appropriate equipment according to half the value of what he has put aside for the Gadgetry equipment. This can be used only as many times as the number of points invested in Gadgetry. Example: if he sets asides 4 points in "Gadgetry" he can pull out of his hat any tool that the GM assumes is worth 2 points. He can do that 4 times this game session.

The GM is allowed to disregard impossible choices (a car while you started alone in the desert) or tools that do not exist (unless you have the 'super spy' or 'mad genius' cliché / Advantage.)

### Magic Items

These are defined through their types. Maybe only a magic sword can defeat the monster or maybe the fire wand just happen to have the right Type to be useful against the Flammable People. They have the same value as any normal equipment but will have unusual types. Perhaps the Gm will only allow players who have magic abilities access to them.

#### Example of unusual Type "Instant healing"

-Healing potion: cures the loss of one point of Innate cliché from a physical contest.

## • Advantages

Advantages give circumstantial bonuses, like equipment, to certain contests. However, they have no type. They give circumstantial bonus only and require some role-playing from the player to justify gaining the bonus. For these reasons every Advantage has a ½ point cost and players must add half points to total a round number (no 1.5 point total Option change).

They are natural abilities, however, and can not be taken away easily. Although they can be negated (being beautiful doesn't work if you are sprayed by a skunk).

Every advantage has a point cost. Like when buying equipment, players are limited to the 3 point-exchange limit. More expensive advantages can be bought later on or might be reserved for non-player characters.

	Bonus	Cost
<b>Beautiful</b>	+1 to +5	.5 to 2.5

Works as a bonus on seduction-like social contests and applies only to those who have a chance to be attracted to the character.

	Bonus	Cost
<b>Allies</b>	+1 to +5	.5 to 2.5

Provide clichés unavailable to the player (only one). Their total point is equal to the bonus. **Their total value is used as an Assistance bonus not a total.** The player MUST role-play the request for help. He can have as many allies as he wants.

	Bonus	Cost
<b>Money</b>	+1 to +5	.5 to 2.5

Like Gadgetry: the money advantage provides variable resources.

The bonus is the Value of the equipment and the total number of objects.

However none of these can be chosen on the spot: they must be given a Type (the only use of type in advantages).

The types can be 'property', 'vehicle', 'weaponry' etc. These limit the kind of things the player can get. Other items can be bought at half Value (round down).

Example: for a +4 bonus (costs 2 points) Adam West can get any +4 Value "Pop culture" items four times per game. Or he can buy any +2 Value item.

## • Disadvantages

*"Now why would I want bad stuff for my character?"*  
*"Because they give you extra points to spend fool!"*

	Penalty	Point Gain
<b>Ugly</b>	-2 / -4	+1 / +2

Works as a penalty on seduction-like social contests halve that value for other types (otherwise all players would take that and just never try to talk to anyone).

	Penalty	Point Gain
<b>Poor (Debt)</b>	-	+1
<b>(Destitute)</b>	-2 or -1*	+2

**Debt-** You owe money. Every asset you find or earn is sold and replaced at half value (a +2 Value sword is seized and replaced by a butter knife Valued at +1). The debt should not be a set number and must be repaid through play.

**Destitute-** You own practically nothing. \* The -2 penalty is applied to either your highest cliché (you don't have any tools & equipment). Or a -1 to all your lowest clichés until you get proper tools. Player's choice.

	Penalty	Point Gain
<b>Code of Honor</b>	-1	+1

The player can create a code of conduct that has to be very restrictive (prohibits even trying some common kind of contests like seduction). Some times he might get a -1 penalty to social rolls when the code goes against someone's values or insults them.

	Penalty	Point Gain
<b>Cursed</b>	-1 / -4	+5 / +2

The GM selects (not you: you don't know) certain contest where you will always fail on a draw (-1). Seduction or thievery for example.

At -4, bad stuff happen to you at least 4 times per game session, preventing you from even attempting one particular contest. For example: climbing a rope that breaks off. These contests must not be in the player's field of expertise (his highest cliché).

	Penalty	Point Gain
<b>Enemies</b>	-1 to -5	+5 / +2.5

Once every game session, the GM assigns an event with an additional enemy. This enemy (or enemies) adds his "penalty" value as a bonus to the contest against the player. This has to be justified within common sense for the player's enemy (-ies) to be there.

## • Powers

It is recommended that Powers, especially super-powers, be handled outside the 3 point move system. Their value goes somewhat beyond Equipment and may unbalance a game. It is suggested that Gm allow players to have a 'pool' of points they can only spend on

## Magic

A special benefit: costs 1 point. You get an additional **Innate Cliché** called "Magic". it has as many points as you put in it. All points can be used to pump up the total of **any** contest. However this must be role-played as a magic ritual/effect. *"I chant KLATU-VERATA NIKTO! And say: I can't punch well but here's a fireball foolish mortal!!!"*

In addition the point spent to get the magic benefit is given a **Learned Cliché** that fits a magic style. This has to be appropriate like "Necromancy" or "Bringing a fiery death to mortals". To get the benefits the player must work with the style of his magic when role-playing. Of course they can have more than one Style.

Although Magic points spent are lost for the game when pumping up the total other contests, the style point is permanent. So you can always pump up a contest with 1 point when using magic that fits your style.

A very imaginative player could have a great amount of magic and do pretty much everything he can think of with magic while only having low scores in all other innate clichés.

## Super Powers

### Super Strength / Agility / Smarts etc

Any "super" Innate Cliché is allowed to have more than 5 points. In a superhero game, it is suggested that In addition, any contest won by the player costs 2 points to the opponent's Total. This power costs 2 points.

### Other super Powers

Like Magic, super powers can have Types. The Value of which are handled like equipment / magic items; they have a bonus, a Value and Types. For every additional type beyond the first add +1 to the value.

	Value	Type
<b>Change self</b>	+2	Change looks/ height & weight / color, hide
<b>-Polymorph</b>	+4	Change species, realm, atoms

**Control** +2 Ask X to do stuff,  
ask X to kill or die for you.

**-greater** +3

Choose a Type of controlled object: Plants, People, animals (specific), insects. They have as much Innate Cliché points as the player (no Learned ones). The greater version gives them twice as much. (Points are spread between one or several individuals.)

**Elemental control** +2 Element + Control  
You can pick one element: fire, water, air, earth, metal (magnetism) sound (sonic) light, darkness etc

**Fly** +1 Air travel

**-super** +2 Air travel + Speed

**Heat Vision** +2 Ranged + Fire

**Insubstantial** +3 Pass trough stuff,  
can't be touched, travel

**Invisibility** +2 Hide + Totally

**Invulnerability** +1 Protection

Reduces by 1 the damage received in contests lost by only 1 point. It can be stacked several times.

**Regenerate** +1 Heal

**-fast** +2 Heal, fast

(+1) Regain 1 lost physical clichés lost to contest after a scene.

(+2) Regain all lost points within a scene.

**Size change** +1 Growth or Reduce

**Stretching** +1 Ranged

+2 Ranged + Entangle

**Telekinesis** +2 Ranged + Damage

You can manipulate things as if your hands are a stone throw's away. Hit & push damage as fighting.

**Telepathy** +2 Hear + Thoughts

Like a psychology / charm contest.

**Wall-walking** +1 Climb at 90°

## Character Progression

### (And what have we learned today?)

Players will eventually want to advance their characters, especially if the game last for multiple sessions.

Gm are free to come up with their home made progression rules, we only encourage them to keep in mind the spirit of the game.

Again, Diceless Risus should incite players to role play their progression. After each session the GM can ask each player "What has your character learned?" This would allow the player to participate in their character's progression.

Based on the cost of increasing clichés below, we recommend giving between 2 and 3 points to players after each game session.

### Points

Players should receive **one** point after every game session. For succeeding in each of these areas:

- |  |
|--|
| <p><b>1- Success</b><br/>Managing to achieve their goal</p> <p><b>2- Role Playing</b><br/>Having &amp; creating the fun, playing in character</p> <p><b>3- Creativity</b><br/>Bonus for extra imaginative play, heroic deeds</p> |
|--|

Don't forget that if you use the generic **Character Cliché**, you must give an additional point after every game he plays. This only increases the character cliché however. There is no cost to this cliché.

These points could be used to increase any Cliché. Of course, as mentioned earlier, this has to be debated as to why the point would go to such a Cliché. Has the character really used that cliché? Did he learn anything in its use?

### Progression Cost

Learned clichés should be less expensive in points than Innate ones.

- |   |
|---|
| <p><b>Learned clichés:</b> 1 point / value of cliché.<br/>(Increasing a 2 point cliché to 3 costs 3 points)</p> <p><b>Innate clichés:</b> 3 points / value of cliché.<br/>(Increasing a 2 point cliché to 3 costs 9 points)</p> |
|---|



### Example of Play session: the final Showdown

**Player** "But wait a minute: we are fighting at a construction site?"

**GM** "Yes"

**Player** "There's bound to be a hammer lying around."

**GM** "Hmmm, I'll give you that. But try to put a role-play spin on it."

**Player** "Ha-ha, as I struggle to my feet, a look of desperation on my bloodied face, I try to run for an exit. The villain laughs at my despair. Then...I spot a hammer."

**GM** "The villain stops laughing and his eyes open in an obvious surprise....he tries to run away."

**Player** "Bastard! I'll get you! I run with him and try to smack his legs."

**GM** "I give your hammer a +4 to your total on this turn because you are attacking from behind too." SMACK! Your total is 7. Your diminished Strength of 3, plus your 4 points in Brawling. You injure his legs; he trips and noisily falls into scaffolds and boxes of nails.

**Player** "He's done for it. I keep at it."

**GM** "Not so fast! This round, because of your wounds, you panic and end up too close. He's facing you and wrestles with you trying to get you to loose the hammer. I lower your hammer bonus to +2. Both your totals are now 6."

**Player** "Hey you can't do that!"

**GM** "Sure I can! +2 is still a very good bonus and he is now facing you." "Besides this is the final showdown: you have to work for it. So suck it up! He he"

## Managing Play

Playing a diceless game brings a slew of new problems. Here are some tactics on how to handle them.

### Game Format

The format of Diceless Risus goes basically like this:

**1-** Game Master describes the situation, the surroundings and the problem / opponent

**2-** The player asks for some additional information, decides what his character does.

**3-** The GM announces what combination of Innate and Learned clichés he needs to do the contest. (Secretly tallies up the total for the opponent / obstacle. Or he assigns a target number to the task at hand.)

The GM could also ask the player:

"What are the clichés do you plan to use or think are appropriate for your character to use in this situation?"

**4-** The player decides if he wants to do some bidding to increase his total. (Not knowing the total of his opponent / obstacle.) He can also debate with the GM to gain some modifiers according to things at hands, help available etc.

The player can also keep his total as-is and see if he can beat the target number set by the GM.

**5-** The GM compares the two totals and assesses: a success, a draw or a failure. It is highly suggested that the GM describes the result.

**Do not just say** "You win" describe fighting moves, long and arduous efforts, the player's moves and his final unexpected failure due to a twist of fate.

This way the player does not know how much more effort he has to put in to succeed.

(Of course, the GM should be clear as to how hard the contest is without using numbers. "The Troll towers over you. Your hardest blow doesn't even faze him." etc)

### Turn of play

Since debating is the mainstay of a character's survival in the contest system, players are bound to fall into a shouting match over things like who acts first, what does each character do etc.

Resolving matters in Diceless Risus is made through debating how one has the upper hand. Because of that players might tend to want to have first say and turn the game table into incoherent blabber.

To avoid this, the GM might want to assign clear turns when the group is asked to debate what they are doing and how they are going to react to what is obviously a new contest. Illustrate the situation / contest directly at the first PC that sees the even / opponent. Then ask the player what he does, not to the whole table. Go back to the other players after this first "surprise" round.

You can also explain why you want this player to talk first by saying his character is the most likely to do so. (The character is quick, perceptive or the contest is within his specialty etc.)

When player have to plan against an event or an obstacle, the GM is least likely to have to break up people talking at the same time. Encourage them to talk amongst themselves for group tactics.

### Arguments (subjectivity)

Players are asked to present their point when resolving a contest. In order to win the upper hand they have to convince the GM why their cliché has a good value or how it is logical that they would get a bonus from circumstance A or tool B.

Players are bound to disagree on what is 'logical', accurate or what has real value. This is where players should remember that:

- 1- The GM is always right! (He is the referee. And, don't worry, he's not out to get you.)
- 2- This is just a game and that everything is relative. What seems important to you might not be to others.

Other situations can be handled like so:

**Player 1** "Now that I picked up this hammer my accountant's Fighting cliché is at 4."

**Player 2** "But that's as much as my swordsman's and he's assumed to already have a sword. This makes no sense."

**GM** "#1 You left your hammer where you picked it up. You are not a fighter like #2 and you didn't think of keeping it. Besides the danger is over now you don't think you need it anymore."

**Player 1** "Why would you take my hammer away?"

**GM** "The only purpose this hammer had was to reward you for smart thinking for that fight scene. Now it's over; let's return to our regular programming."

As long as everyone understands that their task is to have fun, everything should be all right.

### Abuse & repetition

Once a player has got his hand on a trick, he will be very tempted to use it again and again. This is bound to happen when a player comes up with an inventive way to increase his Total in a contest (he picked up a hammer, you gave him a +2) and wants to keep the bonus beyond its original use (he has a permanent boost of +2 to his fighting).

Eventually the GM should step in and say that the bonus was lost through misuse or that it was a fluke and so on. If the player insists on keeping the bonus, things should be made clearer.

Diceless Risus is a storyteller system. The player has to find inventive ways to succeed and every new challenge brings new ideas. Your goal is not to accumulate things or to find some kind of racket that abuses the rules where your character reaches some kind of haven where nothing can reach him and he has no more contest to win anymore.

The game is about using your imagination and creativity. If you spend lots of energy into avoiding that, you have missed the point entirely.

### Preparation & adventures

This system is very open to improvisation; Target Numbers as well as opponents can be made on the spot. You can also use movies and simplify pre-made adventures from other RPG sources for story material.

A good way to plan ahead is to think of a classic challenge: defeat villains, rescue X, find Z, destroy the evil-thingy-that-speaks-in-my-head, copy Adam West's dance moves etc.

Then write up a couple of obstacles and events. Decide on one or two choice of paths for the players and you have yourself an event tree that is good enough for a solid adventure.

Use stereotypes, exaggerate and smash them into pieces for humor. You can also use TV dramas for plot twists that require heart-wrenching decisions from the players. "Do I save Timmy who fell down the well or do I stop the cultists from invoking Cthulhu? ©"

It also helps to have a couple of prepared grunts and big villains, as well as some typical Target Numbers for obstacles (locked door, falling boulders) on paper.

### The "No contest" rule

There are some events that are "No Contest". Like opening a door or identifying Adam West as being a living cliché. Diceless Risus encourages you to make assumptions and not bother the players with useless contests.

Make the contests count. The challenges in your story are supposed to be dramatic events because the game is all about role-playing through the obstacles.

## Additional Rules

GMs can create more rules as they see fit. Remember to keep in mind that Diceless Risus is all about subjectivity and role-playing instead of dice-rolling.

If your home rules keep reflecting that then this small game has done its part. Hope you enjoy this game or that it at least gives you some ideas for new RPG experiences.

## Final Word

Diceless Risus can be used for simple, beer-and-pretzel games or more serious ones. The diceless system is meant to encourage players to replace dice rolling with acting and creative thinking to change the outcome of situations or overcome challenges. Hope you have fun playing it.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions feel free to contact me.

## Dicéless Risus

<p><i>Character Concept</i></p> <p><i>Name</i></p> <p><i>Age</i>      <i>Sex</i></p> <p><i>Origin</i></p> <p><i>Appearance</i></p>	<p><i>Picture</i></p>
<p><i>Innate Clichés</i></p>	<p><i>Learned Clichés</i></p>
<p><i>Possessions &amp; Background</i></p> <p><i>Types</i></p>	<p><i>Notes</i></p>

<p>Cliché character concept:</p> <p>Name Age Looks</p>	<p>Free doodle space</p>
<p>Innate Clichés</p>	<p>Learned Clichés</p>
<p>Stuff I Do, stuff I have Types</p>	<p>Notes:</p>

<b>Innate Clichés</b>	<b>Cliché:</b>
	<b>Name:</b>
	<b>Stuff</b>
<b>Learned Clichés</b>	<b>Notes</b>

<b>Innate Clichés</b>	<b>Cliché:</b>
	<b>Name:</b>
	<b>Stuff</b>
<b>Learned Clichés</b>	<b>Notes</b>

<b>Innate Clichés</b>	<b>Cliché:</b>
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	<b>Stuff</b>
<b>Learned Clichés</b>	<b>Notes</b>