

# Unknown Armies Stress Reference

## STRESS CHECKS

Each stress has two types of notches.

**HARDENED:** Stress checks you've beaten. You are immune to stress checks equal or lower than the number of hardened notches you possess. Numbered 1-10

**FAILED:** Stress checks failed. Numbered 1-5.

**Making checks:** If you do not have a hardened notch at the same level as the stress, make a Mind roll.

**Success:** Mark off your lowest level a hardened notch.

**Fail:** Mark off lowest failed notch and choose:

1. **Panic:** Run away at high speed.
2. **Paralysis:** Indecision, terror, deer-in-the-headlights. May or may not be silent.
3. **Frenzy:** Attack the source of stress by any means.

Act this way until the source of stress is gone. You make no stress checks if in a failed-stress state.

**If you have 5 failed notches** in a meter, you always fail that stress check unless your hardened notches void the check. The first time you hit 5 failed notches in a meter, you gain a mental aberration (ex.: phobia, flashbacks, blackouts, etc.)

Sample Violence Checks	
1	Be attacked with a weapon
2	Witness an act of torture
3	Get shot at random. Be tortured briefly.
4	Kill someone in a fight.
5	Be present at a massive large-scale battle.
6	Perform an act of torture.
7	Deliberately kill a helpless target.
8	Get tortured for an hour or longer.
9	Witness a brutal mass execution.
10	Watch as someone you love is tortured to death.

Sample Unnatural Checks	
1	Experience preternaturally strong déjà vu.
2	See a creature/machine that cannot logically exist.
3	Realize that a vision you've had has come true.
4	See proof that 2+2 does not equal 4.
5	Be successfully attacked by magick.
6	See someone you know killed by irrefutable magick.
7	Have a conversation with a dead loved one.
8	See an animal with human features.
9	See the dead rise.
10	Realize that the reason you've never had children is because your husband is not really a human being.

Sample Helplessness Checks	
1	Unintentionally humiliate yourself in public.
2	Get fired from a job you love.
3	Fail at something when it is imperative you succeed.
4	Get dumped into a pit of maggots.
5	Spend a month in jail.
6	Watch a videotape of your spouse committing adultery.
7	Be placed in a situation where you have to saw off one of your limbs or die.
8	Watch someone you love die.
9	Watch someone you love die because you tried to save them and failed.
10	Be possessed, yet conscious as your body performs unspeakable acts against your will.

Sample Isolation Checks	
1	Spend a day without seeing anyone you know.
2	Spend 5 hours in a sensory deprivation tank.
3	Spend 3 days without talking to another human being.
4	Be institutionalized by someone you love and trust.
5	Spend a week in solitary confinement.
6	See someone you thought you knew intimately behaving in a fashion completely contrary to her normal behavior.
7	Spend a month in a country where no one speaks your language and where you can't make yourself understood no matter how hard you try.
8	Be deeply, painfully, and violently betrayed by someone you love.
9	Be treated like a stranger by your closest friends.
10	Spend a month in a sensory deprivation tank.

Sample Self Checks	
1	Break a minor promise.
2	Be confronted with proof that your self-image is incorrect.
3	Secretly gratify an urge that is contrary to your upbringing and background.
4	Lie to conceal some aspect of your personality from a close friend or loved one who trusts you implicitly.
5	Decide not to act on an impulse from your Noble stimulus because it's 'too dangerous'.
6	Deliberately deceive someone you love in a way that is certain to cause them terrible pain if they find out.
7	Discover you have inadvertently committed an act of cannibalism.
8	Deliberately act completely contrary to your Noble impulse.
9	Kill someone you love.
10	Deliberately destroy everything you've risked your life to support.

**Getting Callous:** If you gain all 10 hardened notches in two or more gauges or when the total sum of hardened marks exceeds 35, you become a sociopath. A sociopath cannot use passions or Avatar skills.

**Mental Help – Pre-Insanity:** Visit a counselor prior to all your Failed notches in one meter filling up. You make a Mind roll, and the counselor makes a Skill roll.

Either of you get a matched success	Erase any hardened or failed notch.
Both you and your counselor succeed	Erase any hardened or failed notch.
You succeed and your counselor fails	Erase any failed notch.
You fail, counselor succeeds	Erase any hardened notch, or choose not to and 'resist therapy'.
Both of you get matched successes	Erase up to 3 hardened or 3 failed notches in one meter.

**Mental Help – Post-Insanity:** After a month of residential treatment, you make a Mind roll and your counselor makes a skill roll. If **both** are successful, you remove your 5<sup>th</sup> failed notch and may return to normal therapy.