

The Role of Essence

A character's Essence is that being's life force. A sentient being in the world of Shadowrun has a set amount of Essence. This life force affects different things in the game including the thin line between life and death. All Human and Meta-human characters in the game begin with an Essence score of 6. This number can be reduced in a number of ways spelled out below.

- Cyberware reduces Essence - surgically embedding cybernetic components into one's body reduces Essence by an amount depending on how invasive the component. See this [list for Essence loss](#) determined by Cyberware components.
- Magic and Spellcasting capability are determined by Essence. The amount of Mana a spellcaster can use is based off Essence and Level. This is why you do not see Wizards and Shaman sporting Cyberware. Particularly powerful spells can temporarily or even permanently reduce Essence when cast.
- Certain spells can temporarily or permanently reduce Essence, although often at a cost to the spellcaster as well (see above)
- A character's Essence score helps to determine what happens when a character takes damage up to their Vitality score. A higher Essence can allow a character to "hold on" long enough to get medical attention if it is close enough.
- Being raised from the dead can reduce Essence. Think of Essence in a sort of "cat with 9 lives" sense in that you can only be brought back from death so many times before death is a permanent state.