

COMBAT

This is our temporary combat article for the 2018 combat system open beta! This article will be filled out more as the csys approaches 1.0 status. MCM's csys is built off of a newly revamped AGE Core system.

Mantles

Any given character with a presence in MCM's combat system is equipped with what is called a Mantle. A Mantle is a cohesive package of an Archetype, Quirks, Weight, core stats, and some invisible factors, that go together to form the character's combat presence, or "character sheet" for combat purposes. All characters have at least one Mantle: the personalized Mantle that represents their character. Mario wears the Mantle of Mario, Cloud Strife wears the Mantle of Cloud Strife, etc. In addition to these, there are a number of publicly accessible Mantles that anyone can temporarily borrow. These represent abstract entities and NPCs that might come up in a plot, or substitute a player character for other reasons. For instance, a scene runner with a character with low combat power may temporarily don the Mantle of a tremendous boss monster to present a challenging battle for a large number of combat-focused PCs.

Archetype: A large package of combat modifiers and tools that defines much of a Mantle's style, presence, and kit. Somewhat comparable to a "character class". A Mantle has only one Archetype. A character Mantle requires an application to change their Archetype.

Quirks: Individual combat modifiers and tools that come in discrete quantities, and are used to modify and personalize a Mantle further from its Archetype. The default number of Quirks a Mantle may equip simultaneously is 3. Players may change the Quirks equipped to their character Mantle freely between battles. The Quirks of public Mantles cannot be changed.

Weight: There are five Weight Classes in MCM's combat system: Light, Medium, Heavy, Superheavy, and Boss. Only public Mantles and TP character bits use the Boss Weight class. The Superheavy class only comes into play when a Heavy uses +keeps (feature to come). That means basically all Mantles come as Light, Medium, or Heavy. Weight factors holistically into a Mantle's full combat ability, and presents an understanding of the character's role in a combat narrative. Higher Weights broadly correspond to greater power, but Weight is only one of several factors that decides the overall power of a Mantle. **Weight will be elaborated on further as we approach release.**

Stats: There are four core stats that all Mantles use: **Power**, which represents how effective the character is at inflicting damage with their hits, **Precision**, which represents how consistently and accurately the character can overcome defenses and hit, **Endurance**, which represents how well the character can weather and take damage when being hit, and **Mitigation**, which represents how adept the character is at reducing incoming damage, through parrying, dodging,

hiding, taking cover, actively using shields and/or angling armour, and so on. These are shown with a narrative descriptor. **Stats will be elaborated on further as we approach release.**

Adjectives

In place of hard numbers and specific figures for bonuses, maluses, and most things that affect base stats and numerical results, we use a system of Adjectives, which denote the relative impact of the bonus or malus in relation to each other. Adjectives feature primarily in our articles on Archetypes and Quirks, to give the player a good idea of what they're buying into when they use them. Though these terms don't feature precise numbers, they are universally consistent with each other. A *Minor* bonus is always the same amount of bonus, it has the exact same relative impact as a *Minor* malus, and both have exactly the same less impact than a *Moderate* bonus or malus. They are effective stand-in numbers. The only numbers that are made publicly available are % chances for something to happen.

The ladder of Adjectives, from least to greatest impact, goes:

Minor
Moderate
Solid
Significant
Major
Superior
Massive
Extreme

Certain effects cannot be quantified in their impact by static and universal means. Instead, they use a second track of Adjectives that denote tight ranges of relative effect. This ladder goes:

Tiny
Small
Standard
Considerable
Substantial
Overwhelming

Resources

There are three primary resources that a Mantle tracks during a battle. **HP**, **Drive**, and **Hype**.

HP: Hit Points. The usual. These begin at 1000 (though this total may be modified by Archetypes and Quirks) and when they reach 0, the combatant loses. 0 HP does not correspond

to character death, nor even necessarily serious injury, but the point at which the character has been hurt and shaken enough to be dissuaded from continuing the fight. **HP thresholds are currently tracked, but not fully relevant until release.**

Drive: Drive is the character's attacking resource pool, broadly summarizing whatever combination energy, stamina, focus, mana, ammunition, and/or will to keep fighting that is relevant to the character's performance. Drive is spent to launch attacks and recovered passively. Drive may be recovered at a faster rate due to Archetypes or Quirks, and may be regained on the spot by the use of certain actions or Pushes.

Attacks come in levels 1-5: **Light, Standard, Heavy, Massive**, and **Finishing** grades respectively. The Drive cost to launch each attack follows:

1/Light:	-5	The character regains 5 Drive.
2/Standard:	10	The character loses 10 Drive.
3/Heavy:	25	The character loses 25 Drive.
4/Massive:	45	The character loses 45 Drive.
5/Finishing:	65	The character loses 65 Drive.

By default, a character regains 5 Drive each time they defend, after the attack is resolved.

The maximum Drive is 100. Characters begin a battle with 70 Drive each, but the second character to attack gains a large bonus to Drive in exchange for not having the first strike. How much Drive a character has at any given time is important as well. Characters at high Drive gain small bonuses during combat, while characters at low Drive are penalized, or even self-harmed.

The Drive thresholds go:

100-81:	Primed	The character gains a <i>Moderate</i> bonus to Mitigation and Endurance.
80-56:	Ready	The character gains no bonus and suffers no penalty.
55-21:	Lagging	The character suffers a <i>Minor</i> penalty to all stats.
20-0:	Overextended	The character suffers a <i>Solid</i> penalty to all stats.
<0:	Wavering	As Overextended, and the character loses 20% of their max HP after each attack.
-25:	Spent	The character loses all remaining HP. Their attack aborts, and the character is defeated.

Hype: Hype is the resource used to use Pushes --unique actions that modify attacks and defenses, and apply special effects. Pushes consume Hype when used, so Hype can be considered a sort of "special bar" or "super meter" in video game terms.

By default, a character regains 2 Hype each time they defend, after the attack is resolved. The maximum Hype is 10.

Pushes

Pushes are modifiers to how attacks and defenses resolve, how resources are generated, and how stats, Archetypes, and Quirks interact, fueled by Hype. All Pushes require a certain amount of Hype to use, and consume that Hype when **activated**. A Push may be activated at **any time**, including after an enemy has attacked you, but right before you choose a defense. Pushes effectively self-weight to the level and kind of action being modified, **preventing the need to save up for the biggest Push to use on the biggest attack in order to be optimal**. Pushes are something to be used whenever it would be helpful or look cool.

A Word on Strategy and Opacity

MCM's combat system is built on the AGE Core system, which sits on the side of obscuring its discrete inner workings while still presenting a solid set of descriptors that allow players to gauge what they are using. The heavy disuse of transparent math is an intentional step to firmly and meaningfully disengage from the minmaxing, build swapping, cookie cutting and mechanics gossip that often plagues MUSH combat systems.

With this newest revision of AGE Core, the internal math uses an extensively complex interplay of mechanics across multiple tracks to ensure an environment where mathematical mastery is **not a salient qualifier to using the csys**, and where extensive knowledge of, and skill in exploiting, game mechanics is **not a requirement to have a fair fight**. Though balancing patches will inevitably happen over time, the core guts of how the system crunches numbers are refined and complicated enough that sharing them would not at all be helpful to the average player looking to optimize a build, and so we **heavily discourage** actions that lead to creating an environment where players perceive a mechanical arms race or bar of mastery to be allowed in. Claiming to have special insight into the matrix, wildly speculating on the competitive viability of people's characters, and similar, can be construed as things that create a negative atmosphere for less mechanically interested players.

That said, there is a minimum bar of general common sense with which we anticipate people will interact with the csys. This bar is pretty dang low, and so the system is not designed to cater to absolutely zero sensible decisions being made. To put it succinctly: If you have 1 HP, 100 Drive, 10 Hype, and decide to throw out an unboosted Light Attack, the system is not going to make that not a self-evidently dumb idea. When it looks like you'll take a lot of damage, try to reduce it. If you're about to try and deal a lot, try to boost it. If you're low on Drive, try to recover it. Don't end fights with full bars of unused Drive and Hype, and don't waste Drive/Hype recovery by sitting at max without using it. Simple stuff.