

Using the *Leap, Run and Swim* Stats in the Miscellaneous Section

By Steven Dawes

In a modern day horror game, skills like running, jumping and swimming can be essential to survive. However, the main book provides little detail concerning these traits, so I came up with my own design to incorporate them into my game.

Performing a Leap

Until something better is posted, the best info I've found on leaping came from the *Heroes Unlimited GM's Guide*, and from there I've tweaked those rules for BTS (see the following notes). I consider the leaping distance numbers to be how high the character can leap *off the ground* and how far they *travel forward* while in the air. This means someone with a power leap of 5 feet up and across could completely jump over an average height chain link fence and the two feet of gardening space in both front of and behind the fence.

However, he'd still need to vault himself somehow over a 6 foot (or higher) fence. How the character can do this is up to the player and GM (vaults himself with a staff, semi-climbs while hopping it with the use of his hands, etc.) For ease of play, I require the characters to use this formula to determine their percentage roll: Total up their P.S. or P.P. attribute (whichever is higher), plus their SPD attribute and then add in their experience level number. This is the percentage number they must roll under to make a successful jump over the fence.

Example: Joe wants to jump a 6ft fence, but can only perform a running leap (power leap) of 5 feet high. Joe has a P.S. of 20, a SPD of 20, and is 5th level. So to make a successful leap, Joe will need to roll a 44% or lower. Be sure to add in any *Pressure Situation* (page 174) penalties as needed.

Running

As any good movie or television show has detailed on many occasions, running is one of the more important skills a modern horror character can have (whether he's chasing after or running away from something). The rule is no exception in my game so I can up with several rules detailing running in a BTS game.

Incorporating terrain challenges: The only notes I've found concerning running is the SPD attribute notes on page 133. While these notes break down the distance covered per attack and per round, they don't offer anything else. Until more info is available, my thoughts on the running stat is that it's based on paved, clear, unobstructed terrain like a sidewalk, street or a running track. While this works, it doesn't feel very gritty, realistic or entices the imagination of the players. So to make things more interesting, I've come up with some quick notes concerning differences in terrain and environment.

When running inside a building or at a location with obstructed terrain: to successfully negotiate the obstacles/terrain without requiring a roll, the SPD/distance covered is cut in half. If

the characters want to keep running at their max speed, they will need to make a successful percentage roll using the same formula as above: Use P.P. or P.S. (whichever is higher), plus SPD, plus level of experience. Note: if there is no terrain challenge, no roll is needed. However, if an environmental affect could hinder his progress, double the amount of the percentage roll needed (using the example above, 44% becomes 88% before any penalties are applied)

When running in the woods or terrain with lots of obstructions: To successfully negotiate this terrain without requiring a roll, the characters can only run at 25% their running speed. Otherwise, the percentage roll formula applies.

Incorporating rain/water/slip hazards: When running outdoors in light rain, or a floor with slick spots, the characters can safely run at half their speed. If they want to go faster, the percentage roll formula applies, and adds a penalty of -10% to the roll required. If the roll failed, the character slips (unless they make a successful “Sense of Balance” skill roll) and loses one action getting back to their feet (and if being perused, the pursuer gets one action distance closer to the character).

In a heavy rain situation, or if fire alarm sprinklers have been set off in a building, or if an otherwise heavy amount of moving water is obstructing the character, he can only safely run at 25% speed. If he wants to go faster, the percentage roll formula applies, and adds a penalty of -20% to the roll required. If the roll failed, the character slips (unless they make a successful “Sense of Balance” skill roll at -10%) and loses one action getting back to their feet (and if being perused, the pursuer gets one action distance closer to them).

Incorporating lighting challenges: As is common in horror games, lighting makes a big difference in most situations. To deal with lighting while running, I incorporate perception rolls in good, fair or poor lighting situations.

In daylight or a well lit environment, only an 8 or better is needed to see all obstacles and challenges while running faster than is safe to run. If perception roll failed, the percentage roll formula above applies.

During the light of dawn, dusk, in a fog, or in fair to poor lighting situations, a perception roll of 14 or better is needed to see all obstacles and challenges while running faster than is safe to run. If the perception roll failed, the percentage roll formula above applies with an additional penalty of -10%.

During night time and/or bad lighting situations (only street lamps providing light through the windows of a building, etc.), a perception roll of 17 or better is needed to see all obstacles and challenges while running faster than is safe to run. If the perception roll failed, the percentage roll formula above applies, with an additional penalty of -20%.

Note: In pitch black situations, running safely is impossible without a light source (and you’re likely to be eaten by a Grue).

Using a flashlight or other good lighting source: Using vision enhancement (such as Nightvision or night sight goggles) removes lighting penalties altogether (only needing a

perception roll of 8 in all running actions).

When using a focal point lighting source (like a flashlight or a torch) use the following table:

- A perception roll of 10 or better is needed to see all obstacles and challenges while running faster than is safe to run during the light of dawn, dusk, in a fog, or in fair to poor lighting situations.

-A perception roll of 14 or better is needed to see all obstacles and challenges while running faster than is safe to run during night time and/or bad lighting situations.

-A perception roll of 17 or better is needed to see all obstacles and challenges while running in an otherwise pitch black environment.

Note: pressure situations can be applied as needed to the above rolls.

Swimming

While I've included info on how to calculate swimming speed in the following *House Rules* section, most of these details were available in the swimming skill info on page 207.

To keep it simple, I use the weight rules on page 135 when considering how much weight the character can carry while swimming without going under. Per lifeguard training, the 20 pound bricks they practice with are equivalent to 150 pounds each, which means that about every 7 pounds worth of dead weight on land is about one pound in the water. Use this ratio when determining the amount of dead weight a person can carry in the water while swimming.

In the case of buoyant weight, it only affects your swimming speed. Example: At age 43, fitness guru Jack LaLanne was able to swim 6.5 miles against the current while towing a 2,500lb cabin cruiser, but it took him hours to do it.

To make this simple, the swimming speed is cut in half for every 2x the weight of the character. Example: A character who weights 200lbs can tow up to 400lbs of buoyant weight at full speed, up to 800lbs at 50% speed, up to 1600lbs at 25% speed, etc.

Using these stats “in-game”

Like any other gaming adventure, the GM presents the situation and challenge, the player states what he wants to do, the GM tells him what roll is needed, and together they imagine the outcome and continue playing. In short, it's all about action and reaction. The following is a short hand exercise of a character trying to run away from a monster he's not equipped to combat, using these rules as the example method of doing it (I'll use “Joe's” attributes mentioned above).

GM: You've run down four flights of stairs and can hear the claws and ruckus of the creature that's now chasing you a few floors above, as if it was having a hard time getting its grip on the old dusty linoleum and is losing some ground. On the bottom floor you shove the rear exit door open, but there's about sixty feet of parking space behind the building and a ten foot tall chain link fence at the end of it; you could try running around to the front of the building, towards the gate entrance where you'd entered the grounds, or you could keep your momentum going and race towards the fence to look for another gate.

Player: With a speed of 20, I can clear the sixty feet in one action. I'll run across the parking lot to get to the fence.

GM: Keep in mind that it's been lightly raining all night, and there's quite a bit of debris and obstacles to race around from people throwing office items out of the building windows. Do you still want to run as fast as you can?

Player: Yes, I need to keep ahead of that thing and get to my car!

GM: Ok, you've got your flashlight on still, so make a perception of 14 (player succeeds). Now, with your P.S. of 20, SPD of 20 and being at 5th level, the base roll needed is 34% or lower, including the light rain penalty (he rolls successfully). Even with all the debris in the parking lot and the rain, Joe successfully approaches the fence in one action, what are you going to do about the fence?

Player: I'll jump-climb it using a power leap since I was already running.

GM: You'll need another successful roll of 34% or better with the rain penalty (player succeeds).

You've safely landed on the other side of the fence. Taking a moment to determine where your car is, the sound of the building's back door breaking off its hinges catches your attention, forcing a quick glance. The creature has smashed through the door, and you notice that its running speed is comparable to yours, but it takes time to hurdle all the debris in its way. A quick glance to your right points out the one remaining lit street lamp on the next block, your car is still parked under it. It's about 230 feet away.

Player: I can get there in four actions at max speed, so I'm running as fast as I can!

GM: Make one successful perception roll as the goal is in your line of sight, (player succeeds) great, now give me four successful percentage rolls for each 60 feet of running at max speed. The sidewalk is still in somewhat decent shape, the roll needed for each attempt is 78% or better, including the light rain penalty.

Player: Oh crap, I failed my third roll!

GM: After covering some ground, Joe stumbles on a crumbling patch of sidewalk and falls over, costing him an action to get back to his feet. (GM rolls percentage dice a few times), as Joe picks himself up, he looks back to check on the progress of the creature, who lacks the dexterity to jump-climb the tall fence, so it took 2 actions to climb over. But it's now on the other side and racing towards you! Give me another perception roll of 14 to resume your mad dash to the car (player succeeds).

Joe, you hadn't noticed this until it was closer, but the chain link fence of the last yard that separates you from your car is only five feet high. Being as you've noticed that the creature isn't very agile with climbing, you may be able to put some lost distance back between you and it. Or you could continue to run down the sidewalk and round the corner of the fence towards your car.

Player: I like the idea of jumping the fence as I can power leap 6½ feet, I'll hurdle right over it! I successfully rolled for running the next 60 feet.

GM: After scrambling to his feet, Joe gets a running start and hurdles over the fence without even touching it, and is now running through the yard, preparing to make another power leap over the fence on the other end of the yard. Joe, make one more successful roll of 34% due to the terrain being tall grass in a muddy yard to get to your car (player succeeds).

(GM makes a roll), your gambit paid off; the creature has to slow down to climb the fence, losing precious ground on you. By the time the creature gets over the fence on the other side of the yard, you've had time to get your keys out, get in the car, start the engine and peel down the street, leaving the creature behind to choke on your exhaust. Joe is safe... for now.