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Roleplayer®

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The *GURPS*® Newsletter

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Split Health in *GURPS*

When dealing with humans and other creatures between 100 and 250 pounds, a single value for HT is usually quite sufficient; the overall health of the individual and the amount of damage it can soak up are generally nearly identical. But when dealing with large or small animals, it is often necessary to break HT down into two values — the first representing the creature's overall health and hardiness, the second quantifying the amount of physical injury it can withstand.

In ***GURPS***, these two values are represented by a split HT score, such as "HT 12/25." The first number indicates the animal's ***health***, the number used for HT rolls, while the second is its ***hit points***, the amount of damage it can take before falling unconscious. For most animals, this is the only deviation from the regular HT rules necessary, but for *really* big creatures — elephants, whales, dinosaurs — a few additional rules are called for. Some of these rules are presented in the ***GURPS Bestiary***; others appear here for the first time.

Shock

When injured, animals have their DX reduced *on their next turn only*, just as humans do (p. B110). The amount of damage needed to reduce DX varies, however, depending on the animal's total hit points. Whenever an animal is injured, refer to the table below to determine the amount by which its DX is reduced on the next turn:

Basic Hit Points	*DX Reduction*
30 or less	-1 DX per point of damage
31-50	-1 DX per 2 points of damage (rounded down)
51-100	-1 DX per 3 points of damage (rounded down)
101-200	-1 DX per 4 points of damage (rounded down)
201 +	-1 DX per 5 points of damage (rounded down)

Death

Just like humans, creatures with split HTs fall unconscious when their hit points drop below 0. As they drop further and further below 0, they roll against their HT to avoid dying, but for very large or small animals, these rolls come at different intervals than they do for humans. The table below indicates at what points an animal must roll to avoid dying, and the point at which it dies automatically:

Basic Hit Points	*First Roll*	*Subsequent Rolls*	*Automatic Death*
30 or less	-HT	Every 5	HT x -5
31-50	-HT	Every 10	HT x -10
51-100	-HT	Every 20	HT x -20
101-200	HT x -2	Every 20	HT x -30
201 +	HT x -3	Every 20	HT x -40

When referring to the table above to determine the points at which an animal must roll against health or die from its wounds, use health or hit points, whichever is *smaller*. Thus, an elephant with HT 17/45 uses its ***health*** of 17 as its HT when determining when it must roll to avoid death. The elephant falls unconscious at 0 or -1 HT, makes its first roll to avoid dying at -17 hit points, makes its next roll at -27, and continues to roll with every 10 points of damage thereafter, until it misses a roll or reaches -170 (health x -10), at which point it dies automatically. A rat, on the other hand, has HT 17/2, and uses its ***hit points*** to determine when it must roll to avoid death. The rat makes its first roll at -2 hit points, another roll at -7, and dies automatically at -10 (hit points x -5). Of course, any HT roll made to avoid death is made by rolling three dice against ***health***, regardless of which value — health or hit points — is higher.

Remember that anyone or anything, regardless of HT, can be killed by a cut throat, decapitation, bullet through the brain, etc. Once an animal has fallen unconscious or is otherwise helpless, it can be killed by any obviously fatal attack. Of course, the GM is the final arbiter of what constitutes "obviously fatal." If he says you can't automatically kill the unconscious tyrannosaur with a .22 pistol, then you can't. If the animal is really out, though, you will probably be able to come up with something . . .

Split HT for PCs

Although the "split HT" was designed for creatures which are much larger or smaller than a human being, it is sometimes appropriate to design a human or humanoid character with a split HT. A split HT is called for when creating a very large but unhealthy character (human or otherwise) — who would have many hit points but little resistance to disease or other forms of physical stress — or a very small but tough character — who would be very resistant to disease, poison or trauma, but not have very many hit points.

To determine the cost for a split HT, find the average of the two HT values, round up, and pay the character points as if the character had a single HT value equal to this average. Thus, a hardy human midget might have HT 15/6 — he is very tough, but his small mass simply won't soak up as much damage as a larger person's would. This character pays 10 points for HT, as if he had HT 11 (the average of 15 and 6 is 10.5, which rounds up to 11).

Raising attributes using points gained through adventure may only be done with your GM's approval. Using these rules, he has three options available: for the cost of a single HT point, he may allow you to raise either hit points by 2, health by 2, or both by 1 each. The character then pays the appropriate amount of points to raise his averaged HT score by one. (Remember that the cost to raise an attribute after character creation is doubled.)

Whenever a character with a split HT makes a roll against HT, he rolls against his ***health*** — the number before the slash. Whenever he takes damage, it is marked off against his ***hit points*** — the number after the slash. A character with a split HT makes his first roll to avoid death from wounds when his current hit points have dropped to -1 x his health or hit points, whichever is smaller. Thus, the midget above makes his first roll when he reaches -6 hit points (hit points x -1), while a sickly giant with HT 8/15, must make his first roll when his hit points drop to -8 (health x -1). After his first roll, a character with a split HT rolls again with every 5 points of additional damage, until he misses a roll or reaches -5 x health or hit points (again, use the smaller value). Of course, the character always rolls three dice against his ***health*** to avoid death, regardless of which HT values is larger.

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