

Alchemy Rules

(These rules are essentially the work of Stephen Martin, with a few modifications by Andrew Larsen. This in no way is intended as a challenge to Mr. Martin's authorship of or copyright on the original material)

Alchemy skills are a category of Knowledge skills, and receive the Knowledge bonus. There are two types of Alchemy skills, Alchemy and Alchemical Formulae.

Alchemy (00): This skill represents a character's basic knowledge of alchemy procedures. It enables a character to recognise alchemical preparations and appropriate materials for alchemy, to understand proper alchemical procedures and formulae, and to correctly follow those procedures. It does not provide knowledge of specific alchemical formulae, which must be learned separately.

Alchemical Formula (00): This skill represents the knowledge of a particular alchemical formula. Knowledge of a formula is necessary to successfully produce a potion that works the way it is intended to.

A character who does not know a formula has no chance of producing that particular potion. Knowledge of one formula provides no benefit in learning another formula (although in some cases a GM may allow a successful roll of one formula skill to provide a small bonus toward a lower skill roll for a similar formula). Thus, a character must learn Adhesive Formula separately from Acid Formula, Healing Formula, and so on, and each advances in skill level at its own rate.

To produce an Alchemical potion, the alchemist must assemble all the necessary ingredients and equipment in one place. Use of this skill takes at least one full day of concentrated effort to produce the potion, although complicated formulae may require much more time. Inappropriate equipment or working conditions or a lack of proper time will impose a skill penalty on the Alchemy skill, while improper materials or a problem with a formula itself will impose a penalty on the Formula skill. If an ingredient is unavailable, a substitution can only be made with a critical success on the Alchemy skill. Anything less results in a poisonous or inert potion.

Successful use of Animal, Mineral, or Plant Lore can help a character. These skills can be used to find appropriate ingredients and in some circumstances may allow the use of improper materials without a penalty.

When producing a potion, the character makes a single skill roll. If the roll is under both the Alchemy skill and the Formula skill, the character has successfully produced the potion. A special success for either skill increases the potion's POT by 1, while a critical success increases the POT by 1d3. A failure on either skill (or both) means that the potion was a failure and all the ingredients involved were wasted, but the character recognises her failure. A fumble on either skill means that the potion is poisonous or inert and the character fails to realise it. The character receives skill checks only if both skills succeed.

Potions are normally created in small doses. A successful use of Alchemy produces a single dose of a potion. Attempting to create more than one dose increases the difficulty, imposing a –10% penalty per extra dose to the Alchemy skill.

All potions have a base POT of 1. Creating a potion with a higher POT is difficult. For every +1 POT that the character desires, a –5% penalty is applied to the Formula skill and 1d4 hours are added to the production time. A character can never produce a potion with a POT higher than his Formula skill /5. In most cases, potions operate by opposing their POT to another statistic, such as CON, hit points, or so on. If they succeed they take effect at their full POT. If unsuccessful, they still take effect at half their POT. The value at which they take effect is their “effective POT”.

Drinking a potion during a combat situation takes at least 5 strike ranks, assuming the character has the potion relatively accessible (such as in a pouch). Potions may take longer to take effect, depending on the potion.

Adhesives: Adhesives are substances that cause two or more objects to stick together. They are normally applied as a liquid to the surfaces in question, and normally require at least one melee round to set. Adhesives generally last for 1 hour. To overcome an adhesive, a character must overcome the adhesive’s STR. Each point of POT gives the adhesive 1 STR or extends the duration of the adhesive by 1 hour. This formula also includes the ability to brew solvents that will dissolve the adhesive in 1 melee round.

Healing Potions: This potion will heal damage done to a living creature. Most healing potions take the form of unguents which must be applied to the injured location. Such potions will heal 1 point of damage to the location per point of POT. These potions take 1 melee round to apply and 5 minutes to take effect.

Some healing potions are taken orally, and target damage to any body part of the user’s choosing. These potions attack the total damage to a location with the potion’s POT. If it overcomes the damage, it heals damage up to its POT. If it fails, it still heals damage up to half its POT. Excess POT is lost, and cannot be applied to another location. Oral healing potions take effect at the end of the round in which they were consumed.

Once a location has been healed with a potion, it cannot be treated again for 5 minutes. A location can only be treated with a potion once in 24 hours, but can be treated by Healing spells. First Aid can be applied before a healing potion but not after it. Potions cannot reattach severed limbs.

Some rare formulae exist which heal damage to STR, CON, and DEX. These operate by opposing the characteristic loss with the potion’s POT as if it were damage.

Poisons: Poisons are substances that are harmful if they are ingested or enter the bloodstream. They generally do not operate by contact, although some rare formulae for contact poisons do exist. Poisons normally take between a few minutes and a few hours to operate, at the GM’s discretion.

Few alchemical poisons provide the toxicity of what nature offers, so most poisons use natural ingredients, and there are actually three categories of formulae: animal poison formula, mineral poison formula, and plant poison formula. The use of Animal, Mineral, and Plant Lore can enable a character to administer an appropriate poison, but Alchemy allows a character to refine a poison, making it last longer, reducing the danger of handling it, and masking any unpleasant taste or colour.

When a character is affected by a poison, the poison’s POT attacks the character’s CON directly. If the poison is successful, the target takes damage equal to the POT of the poison directly to his general hit points. If the poison is unsuccessful, the target takes damage equal to half the poison’s POT rounded down.

Some poisons exist that cause damage to a location rather than the whole target. In general, these operate by paralyzing a location once it has been reduced to 0 hit points. This paralysis lasts for 10 minutes per point of POT.

Another rare type of poison is one that causes a disease rather than direct damage. This is a fourth category of poison formula, but it is rare, and in many circles it is considered chaotic to learn. Producing such a poison without immunity to the disease in question is extremely risky, because there is a chance of acquiring the disease from the ingredients.

Poison Antidotes: Poison antidotes can be taken to reduce or eliminate the effects of a poison. To be effective, they must be ingested after the poison has been ingested, but before the poison has taken its full effect. If taken during this window, the antidote's POT is applied against the poison's POT. If successful, the antidote's POT is subtracted from the poison's POT. If unsuccessful, half the antidote's POT is subtracted.

Some formulae exist that grant temporary immunity to a poison. These antidotes must be taken before the poison is ingested. These formulae work by opposing their POT to the poison's POT before the poison takes effect. If successful, the antidote's POT is subtracted from the poison's POT. If unsuccessful, half the antidote's effective POT is subtracted from the poison before the poison attacks the ingester's CON.

However, each type of poison has a specific antidote. For simplicities' sake, assume that any antidote will operate against any poison of its own category. Thus, any Plant Poison Antidote will operate against any Plant Poison, but not against any Animal or Mineral Poison. There are no antidotes for disease poisons.

Solvents: Solvents are substances that cause immediate damage via acid, alkali, or powerful contact poison. Most will affect organic and inorganic materials equally, although contact poisons will only work against living targets.

Solvents cause direct damage to the location they touch. They inflict damage equal to their POT. If they strike exposed flesh they do their damage directly and immediately to the location in question. If they strike clothing or armour, they spend a round burning through the covering before reaching the skin the next melee round. They destroy the covering, but the covering's Armour Points are subtracted from the solvent's POT at a rate of 1 Armour Point per 2 POT, with any excess getting through to the location next round. If the target is fast enough, he may be able to remove the covering in question or rinse it in water before the solvent reaches the location.

Special Potions: This is a category of many different formulae that produce miscellaneous effects not included above. Many of these simulate the effects of spirit magic spells, but they do not require knowledge of a spirit magic spell to produce. All of these potions operate by opposing their POT to the imbiber's CON. If successful, they take effect at their full POT. If they do not succeed, they take effect at half their POT.

Characteristic Boosting Potion: There are three types of this potion, one each for Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity. Knowledge of this formula covers all three types. Each increases the imbiber's relevant characteristic by 1 point per point of effective POT. These potions cannot take the imbiber's characteristic over species maximum. They last for 10 minutes per point of effective POT. Once they wear off, the imbiber is completely exhausted for a number of minutes equal to the potion's duration.

Confusion Potion: This potion engenders extreme confusion and disorientation in the imbiber, in a manner similar to a Befuddle spell. This effect lasts for 5 minutes per

point of effective POT. To use any skill or cast a spell requires a Concentration roll at –5% per effective POT.

Fanaticism Potion: This potion makes a character angry and agitated. It lasts for 5 minutes per point of effective POT. If the character enters combat, he fights as if affected by a Fanaticism spell.

Flare: This potion causes a bright light when it is exposed to air. This light can be any colour the alchemist chooses. A flare's POT attacks a target's CON if the target is looking straight at it when it goes off. The target will be blinded for 1 melee round per point of effective POT. If the Flare fails to overcome the target's CON, the target is still blinding for the remainder of the round in which the flare was used.

A variation on the flare formula allow a flare to burn less brightly for 1 melee round per point of POT. Another variation causes the flare to burst into flames, burning its target. A third variation allows a flare to launch itself into the air, in the fashion of a roman candle. This formula can be used to produce a variety of fireworks.

Paralysis Potion: This potion induces temporary paralysis. Each point of effective POT reduces the imbiber's movement rate and DEX by 1 and her Agility, Manipulation, Stealth, and Combat skills by 5%. These effects last for 5 minutes per point of full POT.

Power Blasting Potion: This potion drains the imbiber's magic points, just as if the imbiber had cast spells. The imbiber loses 1 mp per point of effective POT. These points are regained normally. Knowledge of this formula is quite rare.

Perception Altering Potion: These potions alter the ingester's perceptions in some way. The most common formula boosts the ingester's Perception skills by +5% for each point of POT. The duration of the potion is 1 minute per POT. However, they make the ingester extremely sensitive to sensory stimulus, so that a bright light might temporarily blind the ingester.

Variations temporarily give the ingester the equivalent of the spirit magic spells Second Sight, Visibility, or various Detect spells. Characters under the effect of such a formula suffer a penalty of –10% to all Perception and Communication skills while the potion is effective.

A third variation increases the ingester's Concentration skill by +5% per POT. Characters under the effect of such a formula suffer a penalty of –20% to all Communication skills while the potion is effective.

Power Restoring Potion: This potion boosts the imbiber's mps. The imbiber regains 1 mp per point of effective POT, up to her normal mp maximum. Excess points are wasted. The mp gain occurs at the end of the round in which the potion is ingested.

Sleeping Potion: This potion causes the imbiber to become drowsy. If the potion overcomes the target's CON, he will fall asleep for 5 minutes per point of POT. If unsuccessful, the target will become drowsy, but not fall asleep. Drowsy characters suffer a –5% penalty to all skills per point of effective POT for a duration equal to 5 minutes per point of effective POT.

Weakness Potion: This potion weakens the imbiber, making it hard for them to exercise their full STR. The imbiber's STR is reduced by 1 point per point of effective POT. This loss lasts for 10 minutes per point of effective POT.

Lanbril Potions: Lanbrili alchemists know most of the common alchemical formulae, and also know a variety of formula unknown to other alchemists. Knowledge of a

particular potion is usually limited to a few rings, so that no one Lanbril alchemist will know all of them.

Most of these potions take the form of dusts and powders, although some are liquids which produce potent vapours or clouds of gas that work through skin contact or inhalation. A standard dose of one of these potions will fill 3 cubic meters of air before slowly dissipating.

Lubricants: These potions take the form of an oil which must be applied to a surface, usually through a small tube. Each point of POT will increase the user's Foil Restraints skill by 5%. A lubricant will also minimise the noise made by hinges. In desperation, the lubricant can be applied to a non-porous surface (such as wood or stone), requiring anyone who walks across the surface to make a DEX x5% roll or slip.

Scent-Stop Dust: This powder is used to block the scent trail left by an individual or small group. A single dose covers 10 meters of trail and reduces all Smell/Taste and scent-related Tracking rolls by 10% per point of POT. A variation of the formula covers one scent with another, so that a powder might smell like deer or trollkin rather than humans.

Smoke Bombs: A typical smoke bomb consists of a small ceramic jar or vial filled with powder or a volatile liquid. When the bomb is opened or broken, it produces a thick cloud of smoke that fills a small enclosed space, to a space of 1 cubic meter per point of POT. Individuals who use sight or scent are effectively blinded for 1 full minute.

It is possible to dedicate POT to increasing the duration of the smoke by 1 minute per point of POT.

Stink Dust: This powder is used to mark an object with a distinctive scent to make it easier to locate. Lanbrili using this formula usually have an animal trained to track the scent in question. Any object marked with the powder gives +5% per point of POT to any Smell/Taste or scent-related Track rolls. This scent usually lasts for 1 day. Used in desperation, a large quantity of this powder can temporarily render a target's Smell/Taste skill unusable.

Thunder-Lung Dust: This powder produces a wracking cough or sneezing fit in those who inhale it. It is usually kept in a ceramic jar or vial and smashed on the target's person. The target will cough or sneeze helplessly for 1 minute per point of effective POT. Any action attempted during this period requires a Concentration roll. Movement rate is reduced by half.