

eldritch

ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

Traps for Eldritch Role Playing



Traps are indispensable Gamemaster tools, the “spice” of any dungeon, thwarting the heroes’ progress lest they become overconfident. And what fun! Large objects drop upon one adventurer, while another hapless hero gets burned to a crisp with a triggered glyph of fire – and that’s just for starters! Find out how traps work in the Eldritch Role Playing system with this succinct and entertaining guide. Herein you’ll find plenty of examples in both mechanical and magical categories, with guidelines on how to create your own. And your brazen players will love you for it, we promise.

Written by Dieter Zimmerman, with contributions by Spencer Wright and Dan Cross
Art by Martin Siesto and Eric Bergeron
Edited by Dan Cross

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Traps for Eldritch Role Playing

Deadly traps are a staple of fantasy role-playing games. They can be clever mechanical blades hidden in the walls of a dungeon, crudely made spiked pits in the jungle, magical tomes that explode when opened, or just about anything else. The key components of traps are that a) they have a damaging, debilitating, or immobilizing effect, b) they are usually sprung when a specific circumstance is met, and c) they usually take their target unawares.

In the Eldritch Role-Playing System, traps are divided into two categories: **mechanical** and **magical**. Mechanical traps are those that can be constructed through mundane means and do not require any magical knowledge or components in their construction. Magical traps, obviously, are those that rely upon arcane effects to harm their victims.

Beyond their type, traps have several other important characteristics: the difficulty of detecting the trap, the difficulty of disarming the trap, the trap's effect, the trap's area of effect, and a description of the trap.

Detection Difficulty (DET): Traps are usually designed to take people by surprise, and thus are often cleverly concealed. A trap's DET is measured in die-ranks exactly as in the Challenge Rank Opposition Dice in the core rules (see below).

Table 2.2 Challenge Rank Opposition Dice

Easy	1D4
Moderate	2D4
Difficult	2D6
Demanding	2D8
Formidable	2D10
Extreme	2D12

A character attempting to search an area for traps rolls a Scrutiny check (with any relevant Specializations and Masteries) against the trap's DET dice.

How well the character succeeds determines what information is known about the trap. If the character barely succeeds, he will only know that there is a trap and whether it is mechanical or magical. A slightly better success might mean the character knows more specifically what the trap does, or how it is triggered. A much better success would give the character all of the above information.

Though magical traps are often themselves invisible, they do leave signs that magically-trained characters can detect. A magical trap waiting to be triggered might be marked by a mystic rune inscribed on a door, a slightly odd lighting effect, or a tingle on someone's skin. A character can use relevant Scrutiny ADCs to detect magical traps, but only if the character also has at least 1D6 in the Arcanum ability.

Note that most traps will not be detected unless a character is actively searching for one.

Disarm Difficulty (DIS): If a trap is detected before it is triggered, it can usually be disarmed. A trap's DIS is measured in die-ranks exactly as in the Challenge Rank Opposition Dice (see Table 2.2 above). A character attempting to disarm a trap rolls using the relevant ADC against the trap's DIS dice.

For disabling mechanical traps, the relevant ADC starts with the Thievery (R) ability. Magical traps are disarmed using the same Arcanum ADC as would be used to cast the spell that created the trap. This is a free ability available to all arcanists, like "detect magic".

If a character attempts to disarm a trap and fails, the trap may be triggered depending on the nature of the trap and how badly the attempt failed.

Effect: The Effect of magical traps is described in the same terms as the Effect of the spell that created it (normally Harm or Influence) and the die-rank of the effect, because magical traps are just spells with a delayed trigger.

Mechanical traps are usually meant to cause harm through a physical attack, and are therefore represented as Potential Harm like an attack by a weapon. They can therefore be avoided by using ADPs (see Defenses below). Also, Mechanical traps can have effects other than (or in addition to) causing Potential-Harm. This is commonly accomplished through poison (see sidebar on page 34 of the core rules).

Defenses: The nature of a particular trap may imply that protection from armor or certain ADPs does not make sense, and so any protection that is effective against the trap's Effect should be noted in the trap description.



Area: A trap's Area describes what is affected when the trap is triggered. It can be a single creature, an area of effect, or something else entirely.

Description: A description of the trap should be included here, as well as any other important information. Other details that may be important include whether or not the trap can be reset and if it resets automatically or manually.

Danger Zones

Dangerous environments can affect Active Defense Refresh rates. If heroes are moving through trap laden corridors of a dungeon with hazards at every step, the GM may declare they're in a "danger zone", causing ADPs to refresh slowly, or not at all, until escaping the situation.

The refresh rate depends on the overall stress level of the situation. If the heroes are in an area they know to be fairly safe, they are considered to be Relaxed. Heroes in a dangerous area who have taken precautions such as scouting around corners and blocking doors can refresh in a Wary state. The heroes must be Vigilant in dangerous areas when they are unable or unwilling to take extra precautions, or if they fortify a position in an extremely dangerous area. When heroes are Stressed (directly involved in combat or a chase, for example) they do not recover any ADPs.

- Relaxed 20% refresh per minute
- Wary 10% per minute
- Vigilant 5% per minute
- Stressed (Combat, Chase, etc) 0%.

Creating Traps

Mechanical traps are built with whatever relevant ADCs a character might have (such as Handicraft > Trapbuilding > Crossbow Traps or Survival > Hunting > Trapping).

The sort of mechanical traps that can be built by players depends on a number of factors including resources and time available. Whether or not a player can build a particular trap and the details of that trap are left to the discretion of the GM.

To create a magical trap, an Arcanist must create a trap ritual. Trap rituals are made in the same manner as any other spell, but they can only be used for creating a specific trap. If a character wants to throw fireballs around in combat and create fireball traps, he needs to learn two different spells, and be a master of artifice. An arcanist must designate to every enchantment ritual an associated arcane source, the particular form or manifestation of the magic effect, a chosen range (always *object*), and the details of the infused magic Effects. Always list the ritual's magic school as "artificer," regardless of the enchantment ritual's power source (see page 53 of Core Rules book for further information on the creation of magic items).

An Arcane Adept can create magical traps with Effects that far exceed the normal range of dice pools. Adepts always have D12 in Arcanum, plus D12 in at least one power source and D12 in his or her chosen school *and* mastery in Artifice). Such an arcanist can create a trap that inflicts various ranges of P-Harm every time it's triggered, like 7-12, 13-18, up to 31-36 points. The GM always rolls a 1D6 to figure the result within the P-Harm range, with 1 equaling the lowest number and 6 equaling the highest.

Rolling a 1D6 to determine special P-Harm is symbolized by an “SD6”.

Special P-Harm Ranges*

- Rank 1: 7-12
- Rank 2: 13-18
- Rank 3: 19-24
- Rank 4: 25-30
- Rank 5: 31-36

* Particularly nasty mechanical traps can have these special P-Harm ranges. Setting such traps requires consummate skill (3 ranks of D12 in the ADC) in the original creator’s relevant ability.

Magical traps are active until triggered or dispelled. The spell point cost is paid at the time the trap is created, not when it is triggered. Magical traps have internal energy points like any other magical item, and become inert when those points are spent (until recharged or created as a permanent magic item). GMs may find it convenient to set a magic trap’s Energy Points to 2x its cumulative Effect dice MRV total. For example, 2D8 Harm Effect would grant 32 Energy Points (2x8 = 16 x 2 =32).

Permanent Magic Traps

Making a magical trap permanent (i.e. it never goes inert) follows the normal rules under the Enchant Effect description (see core rules, page 55). However, “permanency” can be added to not only magic items with static bonuses (i.e. +1 to P-Harm, etc), but also to traps and magic items that show a *range* of P-Harm or effectiveness (for example, a Harm Effect of 2D6 has a range of 2-12). An arcanist who seeks to make an item’s regular Effect permanent must consult the following table:

Ritual Difficulty for creating permanent Magic Traps (and magic items in general)

Total MRV Range or Static Bonus	Minimum Arcanum Rank	Difficulty
1-12 or +1	D4	2D4 (4)
13-18 or +2	D6	2D6 (6)
19-24 or +3	D8	2D8 (8)
25-30 or +4	D10	2D10 (10)
31-36 or +5	D12	2D12 (12)

So a ritual spell to create a trap with the Obscure Effect of 2D12 (a range of up to 24 points max value), and making that trap permanent (never going inert), requires an Arcanum rank of D8 or more, and the ability check is rolled against a difficulty of 2D8 (or just a straight target number of 8).

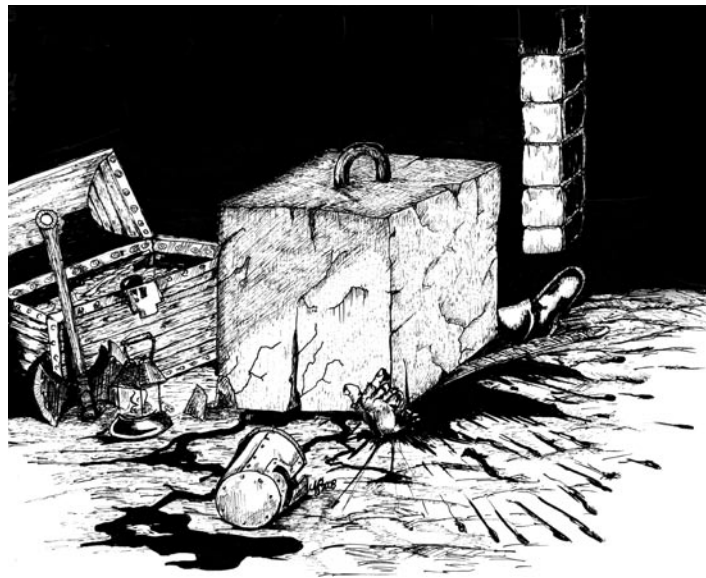
Example Traps

Bear Trap

Type: Mechanical
 DET / DIS: 2D4 / 1D8
 Effect: 3D10 P-Harm
 Defenses: Armor, Evade
 Area: One creature
 Description: Concealed under a pile of dead leaves is a set of iron jaws that snap shut on the leg of a creature stepping into it. The bear trap can be manually reset.

The Brick

Type: Mechanical
 DET / DIS: 2D6 / 2D8
 Effect: 2D10 P-Harm
 Defenses: Evade
 Area: One Creature
 Description: Inset in a wall are a series of gems, each at roughly the height of a human, dwarf, elf, gnome, etc. At first glance the gems appear quite valuable. A lone brick sticks half-way out of the bottom of the wall. The gems seem held in place and cannot be pried out of the wall. If the brick is pushed back into the wall a stone dowel will launch from the wall behind the prospective gem collector and, more or less, strike them in the head, and potentially other areas, with significant force. The “gems” will then clatter to the floor. They are, naturally, near worthless. The trap does not reset.



Electric Room

Type: Magical
 DET / DIS: 2D12 / 2D10 (vs. Primordial)
 Effect: P-Harm 3D10 electricity
 Energy Points: 60
 Defenses: Resilience then Toughness (see below)
 Area: One creature
 Description: A ritual was performed to electrify the walls of the room, as well as any closed doors, and made permanent. The effect can be detected if the low electric hum is heard, otherwise the field is invisible. Anybody

touching a vertical surface will be shocked for 3D10 Potential-Harm. Metal walls increase damage by x1.5.

Explosive Book Trap

Type: Magical (Adept)

DET / DIS: 1D12 / 1D12

Effect: 13–18 (SD6) Harm Effect

Defenses: Dodge

Area: 5-foot radius

Description: A magical rune on the cover of the book causes an explosive fireball any time the book is opened. Unless the book is protected against fire, it will be destroyed in the explosion.

Enfeblement Trap

Type: Magical

DET / DIS: 1D10 / 1D8 (Mystic)

Effect: 2D6 Curse (Feats of Strength)

Defenses: Resilience Only

Area: Archway

Description: Blue light fills the archway whenever someone passes through it, and anyone under the arch is affected by a Curse effect that drains their Feats of Strength ability and all Melee and Unarmed attacks. The trap automatically resets after it is triggered.

Microburst (Arcane Ward)

Type: Magical

DET / DIS: 2D8 / 2D10 (Primordial)

Effect: 2D10 P-Harm

Defenses: Resilience then Toughness

Area: One Creature

Description: A mage can place this arcane ward on almost anything; a book, a door, a chest, a robe, a wand, etc. When anyone other than the mage touches the item they are engulfed in a powerful whirlwind that lifts them rapidly into the air and then dashes them into the ground.

Nightmares

Type: Magic (Adept)

DET / DIS: "detect magic" / 2D8 (vs. supernatural)

Effect: 7-12 (SD6) P-Harm per round (roll D4), then awakened and *Stunned* for 1D6 rounds.

Defenses: Resilience only (never affects Toughness).

Area: All creatures in area determined by GM.

Description: Any creatures attempting to sleep in this area will experience horrible nightmares, draining their Resilience points until they become increasingly drained, at last awakening but unable to react to their surroundings.

Poisonous Gas Cloud

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: [scales from] 2D8 - 2D10 / [scales from] 2D4 - 2D8

Effect: Poison [scales from] 2D6 - 2D12 P-Harm, once or [scales from] 1D8 - 2D6 Resilience loss per hour (see below)

Defenses: Resilience then Toughness.

Area: 5' Diameter Cloud

Description: This trap can be placed virtually anywhere

the GM desires: the mouth of a statue, the keyhole on a treasure chest or a door, an alchemical effort gone wrong, etc. When triggered a small glass container breaks and the gas escapes. The potency of the gas is variable and it can have a one-time effect or linger until removed from the poor sod who contacted it. In any event, once Resilience is reduced to zero the poison will attack Toughness next. The trap does not reset.

Poison Needle Trap

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: 2D8 / 2D10

Effect: Poison (see below)

Defenses: None (see below)

Area: One creature

Description: A poisoned needle inside the lock pricks the finger of anyone attempting to pick the lock. The victim is unaffected by the needle if he is wearing anything stronger than leather on his hands. If the victim is pricked by the needle, he suffers the effects of a powerful poison. His Resilience is reduced by 1D8 per hour, and Toughness is affected if Resilience is reduced to zero. The poison remains in effect until it is removed or the victim is dead. There is only enough poison on the needle to affect one creature, so the trap cannot be reset.

The Reverse Pit

Type: Magical (Adept)

DET / DIS: 2D8 / 2D12

Effect: 19-24 P-Harm (SD6), 2D6 P-Harm

Defenses: Resilience (versus Illusion / Reverse Gravity), Evade (1/2 effectiveness vs. Spikes)





Area: One Creature

Description: An upward shaft of 20 feet in height is masked by an illusionary 10 foot square section of ceiling. When stepping under the illusionary section the unfortunate character is propelled upward via a sudden reversal of gravity and then slammed back to the ground by another reversal of gravity. The top of the shaft is filled with spikes. The trap is constant.

Screaming Crystal

Type: Magical

DET / DIS: 1D4 / 3D12 (vs. *Supernatural*)

Effect: P-Harm [round 1 2D6, round 2 3D6, round 3 19-24 (SD6)] leading to Influence [round 1-distract, round 2-stun, round 3-incapacitate].

Defenses: Resilience only.

Area: 5' radius

Description: Any creature moving within 5' of this shiny glowing crystal shard will invoke supernatural screams from the souls trapped within. Every round the basic effect gets more serious, inflicting increasing P-Harm to penetrate Resilience. Any creature whose Resilience is brought to zero suffers distraction in round one, stunning in round two, and incapacitation in round three (see the Influence Effect for details).

Slanting Corridor

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: 2D8 / 2D6

Effect: [scales from] 2D8 - 2D12 P-Harm *additional 2D8 P-Harm

Defenses: Evade

Area: Special

Description: A corridor of varying length leads to an ornate metal door. The door is made of steel, quite large and looks very secure. When enough weight is gathered in front of the door (generally three player characters) a section of the corridor suddenly slants downward, dumping all into a shallow pit slightly larger than the door. The door, which is merely a large steel weight, then falls in on top of them. *If Evade reaches zero then the character is trapped beneath the steel weight and exposed to additional P-Harm. The trap does not reset.

Slow Death Scroll

Type: Magic

DET / DIS: 1D4 / 2D10

Effect: Maintained P-Harm 13-18 (SD6) per round, plus Incapacitation if P-Harm exceeds Resilience.

Defenses: Toughness.

Area: One Creature reading scroll

Description: A dusty old scroll, rolled up with some magic seal. Placed just where some unsuspecting or naive adventurer will inevitably

pick it up and regret it. The act of reading it triggers the effect. Incapacitation is not immediate because Resilience mitigates the effect. A roll of Willpower versus 2D10 will stop the maintained P-Harm.

Spear Trap

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: 1D8 / 1D8

Effect: 2D10 P-Harm

Defenses: Armor, Deflect, Evade, Weaponry

Area: One creature

Description: A pressure plate in the floor causes a spring-loaded spear to be thrust from a false panel in the wall at the creature that triggered the trap. The trap can be manually reset.

Spiked Pit Trap

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: 2D4 / 2D12

Effect: 2D10 P-Harm, 2D6 P-Harm

Defenses: Pit-Dodge, Spikes-Evade , Armor

Area: 10-foot square

Description: A 10-foot by 10-foot section of the floor has been designed to collapse when more than 150 pounds of weight is placed upon it. When the floor breaks apart, anything on it falls into a 20-foot deep pit with iron spikes. Because the pit is basically an area attack, only the Dodge ADP can be used to avoid it. The fall causes 2D10 P-Harm and the spikes cause an additional 2D6 P-Harm. If a character manages to avoid falling in the pit, then he is unaffected by the spikes as well. It requires a Moderate (2D4) climbing roll to get out of the pit. The trap cannot be reset.

Spin Trap

Type: Magic

DET / DIS: “detect magic” / 2D6 (vs. ADC including Mystic power source).

Effect: modified Travel effect, power source always Mystic.

Defenses: the advantage “Sense of Direction” or disarmament.

Area: as large as the GM deems in his dungeon, but usually 5 to 10’ square to trigger.

Description: Stepping into this area triggers a magic field that spreads out and touches every sentient creature standing within 10’ of each other, like a chain reaction.

All creatures are immediately affected, and will suddenly find themselves facing the opposite direction. This creates no sensation other than confusion, and if the Spin Trap is in a darkness zone or a hall of mirrors, this can be truly problematic. The advantage of “sense of direction” thwarts the trap outright for those possessing it.

Tainted Trove

Type: Magical

DET / DIS: 2D8 / 2D8 (Mystic & Primordial)

Effect: Illusion / Poison 2D10 P-Harm per hour until removed, beginning one day after contact

Defenses: Resilience then Toughness

Area: One Creature

Description: A vast and fantastic treasure trove is discovered containing all manner of valuables as the GM can devise. This is an intricate illusion layered on top of base metal coins, rocks and junk weapons, etc. Everything has been treated with a slow acting but very potent contact poison that will eat away at the character’s Resilience and then Toughness likely resulting in death.

Tripwire Darts / Pendulum Blade / Falling Block, etc.

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: [scales from] 2D4 - 2D8 / 2D4 - 2D8

Effect: [scales from] 2D4 - 2D10 P-Harm

Defenses: Evade

Area: One Creature

Description: A very thin, camouflaged or hidden tripwire springs the trap when broken. The exact nature of the trap is variable and left to the discretion of the GM. The trap does not reset.

Vanishing Stairs

Type: Mechanical

DET / DIS: 2D6 / 2D8

Effect: [scales from] 2D6 - 2D12 P-Harm

Defenses: Evade

Area: Special

Description: A stairway of any type, ascending, descending, straight or spiral can host this trap. When unsuspecting character(s) trigger the trap (GM’s discretion) the stairs suddenly flatten out, forming into a type of slide. The surface is highly polished and very slick! All effected cascade downward or backward as the case may be where there is usually a deep spike laden pit waiting for them or perhaps a pool of burning oil. The trap can reset at the GM’s discretion.

Vermin Box

Type: Magical

DET / DIS: 2D4 / n/a

Effect: Distraction and 1D4 P-Harm

Defenses: Evade

Area: 5’

Description: A small magical box containing an impossible number of aggressive rats opens upon being touched. Anybody within 5’ of the box suffers a phase penalty on initiative during their next action. Also, those who are standing in the area take 1D4 P-Harm (mitigated by Evade).