

GURPS: Worst-Case Scenarios

These scenarios are inspired by the “Worst-case Scenario” survival books and can contain scenes of graphic violence that may be appropriate for roleplaying games. The game mechanics presented here are meant to handle scenes quickly and may not coincide with the GURPS basic rules. These mechanics are guidelines only; the GM should feel free to adjust the rolls as needed. Good roleplaying should give bonuses to many rolls. Similarly, associated “*flavor text*” is meant as an example of a successful result and should be modified or ignored as desired.

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Urban Scenarios

- **Falling from a Rooftop (single story):** Roll vs. Acrobatics or DX-3, or take 1d damage.
- **Breaking Down a Door:** Roll vs. ST-3.
- **Dealing with a Downed Power Line:** Roll vs. Electronics.
- **Jumping from a Bridge or Cliff into a River:** Take 1d damage per 20'. Roll vs. swimming to reduce damage by 1 die
- **Jumping from a Building into a Dumpster:** Take 1d damage per 10'. Roll vs. DX to reduce damage by 2 dice.
- **Jumping from Rooftop to Rooftop:** Roll vs. jumping or DX-2.
 - If missed, roll vs. DX to grab hold of the edge, then vs. ST to pull yourself up.
 - If that is missed, roll vs. DX-2 and ST to grab something on the way down.
 - Otherwise, take 1d per story fallen.
- **Escaping When Tied Up:** Roll vs. Escape (p.B65). “*You relax your body to make it smaller, and then slowly work your bonds free.*”
- **Surviving in a Plummeting Elevator:** Beforehand, Roll vs. Mechanic (default IQ-5) or ST-3 to open the door or ceiling hatch. Otherwise, roll 1d per 2 stories plummeted. Lying flat reduces this by 1d.
- **Surviving a High-Rise Hotel Fire:** Roll HT+3 each turn or take 1 hit from smoke.
- **Surviving an Earthquake:** Make a fright check, then roll DX each round to run. Collapsing buildings might do 1d-2 *dice* of damage

Vehicle Scenarios

- **Hotwiring a Car:** Roll vs. Mechanic-2 or Electronics-4.
- **Ramming another Car:** Contest of Driving skills. Winning by 5+ causes the rammed car to spin out or crash.
- **Ramming a Barricade:** Roll vs. Driving or crash for 3d-9 damage. *“You accelerate to 40 mph and crash through the weakest part of the barrier.”*
- **Escaping from a Sinking Car:** Roll vs. Swimming.
- **Performing a Fast 180-Degree Turn with Your Car:** Roll vs. Driving-3.
- **Jumping from a Moving Car:** Roll vs. Driving, DX and Acrobatics. Take 3d, damage minus 1d for each successful roll. *“You slow down and dive out perpendicular to the car, then log roll with you hands over your head until you come to a complete stop.”*
- **Escaping from the Trunk of a Car:** Roll vs. Mechanic-2 or ST-6. Each attempt takes one Fatigue. *“You find pry open a panel and release the trunk latch.”*
- **Stopping a Car with No Brakes:** Roll vs. Driving skill each turn until achieving 3 successes in a row. Three failures in a row results in a crash for 3d-9 damage. *“You downshift and use the e-brake to eventually bring yourself to a stop.”*
- **Escaping from a Car Hanging over the Edge of a Cliff:** Roll vs. DX (+ strong will). *“You slowly move to the back seat, then dive out the rear down as the car goes over the cliff.”*
- **Leaping from a Motorcycle to a Car:** Roll vs. DX-2 or fall for 3d damage
- **Maneuvering on Top of a Moving Train:** Roll vs. DX each turn to move at ½ speed. Failure by 5+ (or critical failure) results in a fall for 3d damage.
- **Jumping from a Moving Train:** Roll vs. DX and Acrobatics. Take 3d-1 damage, minus 1d for each successful roll. *“You dive out perpendicular to the train, then log roll with you hands over your head until you come to a complete stop.”*
- **Stopping a Runaway Passenger Train:** Roll vs. IQ to pull the emergency brakes or (if not available), roll Driving-train (default IQ-5) to stop the train. *“You move enough levers that the engine starts to shut down.”*
- **Crash-Landing a Plane on Water:** Roll vs. Piloting skill (default IQ-6). Passengers take 1d-2 damage per point roll was missed by (then roll vs. Swimming to get clear of the plane). *“You coax the nose up the plane up just before hitting the water.”*
- **Surviving an Airplane Crash:** Roll vs. Piloting or crash (defaults to IQ-6, IQ-3 if receiving instructions via radio). Passengers take 1d damage per point roll was missed by. *“You land the plane roughly on its belly. You hear the sound of tortured metal as the plane slowly slides to a halt.”*
- **Surviving if Your Parachute Fails to Open:** Roll vs. DX, Perception and Parachuting. Take 20d damage minus 1d for each successful roll.
- **Landing a Plane:** Roll vs. Piloting+3 or IQ-5

Medical Scenarios

- **Performing a Tracheotomy:** Roll vs. Surgery, Physician-2 or First Aid-5. Each attempt does 2d damage to the patient.
- **Using a Defibrillator to Restore a Heartbeat:** Roll vs. Physician, Surgery or First Aid-4.

- **Diffusing a Bomb:** Roll vs. Demolition twice. The bomb detonates if both rolls fail.
- **Delivering a Baby:** Roll vs. Physician or First Aid until successful. Critical failure kills the child or mother.
- **Treating Frostbite:** Roll vs. Physician or First Aid (as per p.B128).
- **Treating a Leg Fracture:** Roll vs. Physician or First Aid (as per p.B128).
- **Treating a Bullet or Knife Wound:** Roll vs. Surgery, Physician, or First Aid (as per p.B128).
- **Treating a Severed Limb:** Roll vs. First Aid as normal. *“You apply a tourniquet and elevate the limb.”*

Social Scenarios

- **Surviving a Riot:** Roll vs. average of Stealth and Tactics. Take 1 point of damage for each point missed by. *“Looking inconspicuous, you stay clear of conflicts and make your escape”*
- **Passing a Bribe:** Roll vs. streetwise, bureaucracy, savior-fair etc. (as appropriate) to pass an appropriate bribe and gain a “Good” reaction. Failure results in a “Bad” reaction. Critical failure results in arrest. *“The official happily accepts your pre-payment of any applicable fines.”*
- **Running a scam:** Contest of Fast-talk or Sleight-of-hand vs. IQ or Streetwise.
- **Picking pockets:** Contest of Pickpocket vs. Perception or Streetwise. *“You bump the mark to draw his attention away from his pocket, then skillfully lift his wallet.”*
- **Tailing someone:** Contest of Shadowing vs. Perception. *“You nonchalantly follow your target, occasionally glancing out of the corner of your eyes and shifting your clothes around.”*
- **Losing Someone Who Is Following You:** Contest of Stealth vs. Shadowing. *“After moving through some crowds and a cluttered shop, you eventually lose the person tailing you”*

Animal Scenarios

- **Surviving a Poisonous Snake Attack:** Roll vs. Survival (any appropriate).
- **Fending Off a Shark:** Roll vs. Survival (island), Swimming, or Seamanship, all at – 2.
- **Escaping from a Bear:** Roll vs. Survival (woodlands), Animal handling-2 or Tracking.
- **Escaping from a Mountain Lion:** Roll vs. survival (plains) Animal handling-2 or Tracking-1.
- **Wrestling Free from an Alligator:** Roll vs. survival (swampland) or Animal handling-2
- **Dealing with a Charging Bull:** Roll vs. Animal handling-3 until successful. Failure results in a 1d+2 slam attack (13-).
- **Control a Runaway Camel:** Roll vs. Riding skill each turn until achieving 3 successes in a row. Three failures in a row results in a fall for 1d-4 damage. *“You force the camel to run in a circle until it eventually gets tired and sits down.”*

- **Dealing with a Tarantula:** Roll vs. DX to brush it off. If bit, roll vs. HT-2 or you take 1d damage and are at -3 DX for three days. *“The spider skitters away harmlessly.”*
- **Treating a Scorpion Sting:** Roll vs. First Aid as normal. *“You keep calm and treat the resulting symptoms.”*
- **Catching Fish without a Rod:** Roll vs. appropriate Survival. *“You make a scoop out of saplings and your shirt.”*
- **Making Animal Traps:** Roll vs. Survival or Traps-5.
- **Stopping a Runaway Horse:** Roll vs. Riding skill each turn until achieving 3 successes in a row. Three failures in a row results in a fall for 2d-8 damage. *“You talk reassuringly to the horse and firmly regain control of the reins, bringing the beast to a stop.”*

Outdoor Scenarios

- **Survival (general):** Roll vs. survival each day or lose 1d hits. Use [GURPS Survival](#) for more detail.
- **Dehydration/Starvation:** Lose 2 HT each day for not drinking. Lose 3 HT each day after 4 days of not eating.
- **Landslides:** Roll vs. DX-1 to dive out of the way, or take 2d crushing and be pinned.
- **Making Fire Without Matches:** Roll vs. Survival-1. Each attempt takes 1 hour.
- **Finding Your Way without a Compass:** Roll vs. Survival+3. *“You find moss on the North side of trees.”*
- **Purifying Water:** Boil it, or Roll vs. Survival. *“You make a filter out rocks, sand, and your socks.”*

Cold Weather Scenarios

- **Surviving When Lost in the Mountains:** Roll vs. Survival (mountains)-2 each day or lose 3 HT.
- **Freezing weather:** Roll vs. HT (or Artic Survival), each hour or lose 2 Fatigue (use HT when fatigue runs out).
- **Building a Shelter in the Snow:** Takes 1 hour. Roll vs. Survival (Artic). *“You dig out a snow cave from a suitable snow bank.”*
- **Surviving a Fall through Ice:** Roll vs. DX to avoid falling in. If missed roll vs. Artic Survival or (average swimming, HT and ST)-encumbrance level until successful. Lose 1 fatigue for each point missed by. *“You slowly drag yourself out of the hole and carefully roll away from it.”*
- **Surviving in Frigid Water:** Roll vs. HT (or Artic Survival), each minute or lose 3 Fatigue (use HT when fatigue runs out). *“You float with you limbs in close and keep movement to a minimum.”*
- **Surviving an Avalanche:** Roll DX-1 to dive out of the way, or take 2d crushing and be pinned (1d-3 cold damage each minute).

Desert Scenarios

- **Surviving When Lost in the Desert:** Roll vs. Survival (desert)-1 each day or lose 4 HT.

- **Extreme heat:** Roll vs. HT (or Desert Survival) minus encumbrance level, each hour or lose 2 Fatigue (use HT when fatigue runs out).
- **Surviving a Sandstorm:** Roll vs. Desert survival or take 1d damage per hour exposed. Navigation is at -5.
- **Severe wind effects:** Ranged attacks and hearing rolls are at -4.

Tropical Scenarios

- **Surviving When Lost in the Jungle:** Roll vs. Survival (jungle) each day or lose 1 HT (lose 2d HT on a critical failure). *“Traveling during the daytime to avoid danger, you are able to follow animal tracks to a river and food.”*
- **Finding Water on a Deserted Island:** Roll vs. survival (Island). *“You collect water from rain and local vegetation.”*
- **Escaping from Quicksand:** Roll vs. survival Jungle or ST-4. Five tries max.
- **Surviving a Volcanic Eruption:** Take 1d damage from falling debris. Ground level toxic fumes cause 1 damage each round that a HT roll is failed. Lava flowing downhill has a Move of 8. *“You cover your head and move to higher ground”*
- **Crossing a Piranha-Infested River:** Roll vs. Survival (jungle) to avoid or Roll vs. swimming -3 and take 1 point of damage for each point failed by. *“You quickly and quietly cross the river away from the feeding area.”*
- **Removing a Leech:** Roll vs. First Aid or Survival (Swamp or Jungle). If failed, roll vs. HT to avoid infection.

Waterborne Scenarios

- **Rapids:** Roll vs. swimming (minus x2 encumbrance level) to make it to the shore or take 1d-3 crushing. After 8 failures (or a critical failure) the character goes unconscious.
- **Climbing out of a Well:** Roll vs. climbing+2. *“Bracing yourself against opposite walls, you inch your way out.”*
- **Getting to the Surface If Your Scuba Tank Runs of Air:** Roll vs. Scuba-2 or Swimming-4. Take one Fatigue for each point the roll is failed by. Falling unconscious at 0 fatigue can be *bad* here.
- **Surviving Adrift at Sea:** Roll vs. Survival (ocean)-1 or Seamanship-3 each day or lose 5 HT.
- **Surviving a Tsunami:** Move to higher ground or take 3d damage. Roll vs. swimming to reduce this by 1d.
- **Surviving a Riptide:** Roll vs. Swimming minus encumbrance level until successful. Lose 1 fatigue for each point missed by. *“You swim parallel to the shore until you are beyond the riptide.”*
- **Surviving a Trip over a Waterfall:** Take 3d-4 damage. Roll vs. swimming to reduce this by 1d. *“You plunge into feet-first with your arms around your head, emerging downstream moments later.”*
- **Crossing a swift river:** roll vs. Swimming. Use DX or ST if crossing by rope. A successful Survival roll will give a +2 (*“the best place to cross hereabouts”*). If missed, roll Swimming to not get washed downstream. Roll DX to grab a fallen tree jutting into the river, or roll Swimming to get ashore.

