

**Willpower Test.** The threshold for this test is determined by the gamemaster, as appropriate to the potency of the substance (see the Addiction Threshold Table for some examples). If the character doesn't get enough hits to achieve the drug's threshold, she fails and is addicted.

**Glitches:** A glitch result indicates addiction is resisted, but the character suffers a bad experience with the drug (a bad trip, nasty side effects, or something similar). A critical glitch means addiction occurs *and* the character develops an increased tolerance to the substance.

## Roleplaying Addiction

Characters can handle addiction in different ways, depending on their Addiction level (p. 80).

Those with a **Mild** addiction are more social or habitual users. They will have a craving “now and then,” and will unhesitatingly indulge in their drug of choice, seeing no reason not to. Many will not recognize that they even have a problem, though any attempts to “cut back” or go “cold turkey” will be problematic. While the addiction could get worse, at this stage it's manageable.

Characters who have a **Moderate** addiction have developed tolerances and stronger cravings, so they may use more frequently, take stronger dosages, or move on to a harder substance. By this time, the problem is more noticeable even if a character attempts to hide it or deny it. She may experience (additional) repercussions from her habitual use, display increased mood swings or unreliability, and may begin to have financial difficulties due to increased spending on her habit.

Characters with a **Severe** addiction are more like the junkies many think about when given the term “addict”—out of control, strung out, continually needing a fix, borrowing money to finance their habit, and so forth. Some may become desperate and resort to more theft (if the character is a shadowrunner already, she may already be doing this), gambling, borrowing money from unreliable or loan shark services, and anything else the player and gamemaster can think of. How bad this gets is left up to the player and gamemaster, keeping in mind that if or when a character bottoms out, she could die or be inspired to quit.

**Burnout** characters are on their way down, and it's not pretty. These are characters with long-term Severe addictions who are now exhibiting physical and mental side effects from continual substance abuse. Characters who continue in this state for long will continue to suffer deteriorating health effects determined by the gamemaster. Such effects may include:

- Lost Essence.
- Attribute loss (Mental or Physical); this will also affect a character's natural attribute maximums.
- Psychological problems such as flashbacks, blackouts, drastic and violent mood swings, paranoia, schizophrenia, amnesia, and so on.

- Physiological health issues as appropriate to the substance, including such fun things as abscesses, incontinence, a weak immune system (see p. 84), lower pain tolerance (see p. 82), slurred speech, and so on.
- Stun damage that cannot be healed.

## Getting a Fix

Once addicted, users need a dosage, or fix, on a regular basis, as appropriate to the severity of the addiction (*Addiction*, p. 80). If a character wants to resist cravings, make an Addiction Test as noted above, applying modifiers as appropriate to the addiction level. If the character does not resist the cravings, she must immediately get a fix or go into withdrawal.

## Withdrawal and Staying Clean

Withdrawal, whether voluntary or forced, can be difficult. During the withdrawal period, the character can suffer a range of adverse effects, as determined by the gamemaster. Effects may include: appetite loss, cramps, cravings, delusions, depression, emotional instability, insomnia, irritability, nausea, shaking, sweating, and worse. The gamemaster may decide to impose a dice pool modifier to all of the character's actions equal to the drug's Addiction Threshold for the duration of the withdrawal period.

Once the character has beaten addiction, she should rest to allow herself to heal and bounce

back; it's not easy kicking a habit. Even after withdrawal and recovery, though, cravings may still linger. How the character deals with it should be discussed between player and gamemaster. The body may no longer need the drug, but the mind still craves its presence.

## Overdosing

Extreme amounts of anything can kill a metahuman. The exact point at which “a lot” becomes “too much” and causes toxicity varies, depending on the substance in question. It is the gamemaster's call to decide when this point is reached and when to start applying additional damage to the character. As a general guideline, inflict an extra box of damage every (Body) doses.

## DRUGS

Drugs include everything from synthahol to performance enhancers to common street drugs. If a character gets high on street drugs, roleplaying should be encouraged. Most people on drugs change dramatically. They may become less inhibited, euphorically happy, sexually aroused, paranoid, hyper-aware, mellow and incoherent, or enter a berserk, psychotic rage.

## Bliss

**Duration:** (6 – Body) hours, minimum 1 hour

**Effect:** –1 Reaction, +1 to all thresholds, Pain Resistance 3

**Description:** A tranquilizing narcotic, bliss is an opiate synthesized from poppy plants. In addition to other effects, bliss

## ADDICTION THRESHOLD

### Sample Substance

Hallucinogenics, Dreamchip BTLs  
Stimulants, Moodchip and Personafix BTLs  
Narcotics, Tripchip BTLs

### Threshold

1  
2  
3