

Karma Points and You

By Tim Koppang

suptk@yahoo.com

<http://www.geocities.com/suptk>

Disclaimer: Shadowrun along with the rules and concepts summarized in this document are copyrighted by FASA Inc. The author takes no credit for their creation. This is meant as a supplement to SR3 for those who own the book.

Karma Points and You

“In Shadowrun, Karma measures the experience characters gain when they go out on an adventure. They do not gain Karma for doing laundry, unless the laundromat is in an urban combat zone” (Shadowrun 3rd Ed.).

“Good Karma is what the players use over time to improve their character. Karma Pool is used by players during game sessions for saving their character’s hoop in tight situations.” (Shadowrun 3rd Ed.).

-- -- --

Karma is not simply awarded for killing the most security guards, or blowing up the most corporate property. It represents your ability to learn and interact with the world through your character. Playing in the role of your character and doing things that he would do, even in the face of danger, will score you Karma. Providing the group with helpful insights, heroic feats, and humor is a good way to gain extra points. On the other hand, combat wombats aren’t necessarily going to be wallowing in the rewards.

As you earn your Karma points you should note that both Good Karma and Karma Pool are tracked separately. Although you will only be awarded Good Karma, every twentieth point is added to the Karma Pool. Humans, on the other hand, receive a point to their Karma Pool every tenth point.

Spending Good Karma: Once your GM awards you your Good Karma points you are probably going to want to spend them at some time. However, simply spending the points may not be enough. Your GM may require you to have used the skill you are improving during play, or could have you track down a teacher to impart the extra knowledge. Regardless, check with your GM before getting that Body rating of twelve.

Attributes may be improved one point at a time. To do so you must pay twice the rating of the new level in Good Karma points. For example, raising your Body from four to five, costs ten points. Make sure to use your natural ratings, unaugmented by cyberware or other such effects. There are some limitations to what you can raise, and to what level. Characters cannot improve Essence or Magic with Good Karma, and may not increase Reaction directly. In addition, you should keep in mind the Racial Attribute Limit Table. It is possible to raise your attributes above these levels, but this is rare and should be talked over with your GM first. Rules for this are located on page 244 of SR3.

Racial Attribute Limit Table

Racial Modified Limit (Attribute Maximum)

	Elf	Dwarf	Ork	Troll	Human
Body	6 (9)	7 (11)	9 (14)	11 (17)	6 (9)
Quickness	7 (11)	6 (9)	6 (9)	5 (8)	6 (9)
Strength	6 (9)	8 (12)	8 (12)	10 (15)	6 (9)
Charisma	8 (12)	6 (9)	5 (8)	4 (6)	6 (9)
Intelligence	6 (9)	6 (9)	5 (8)	4 (6)	6 (9)
Willpower	6 (9)	7 (11)	6 (9)	6 (9)	6 (9)

Skills are improved according to the following table.

Karma Points and You

Skill Improvement Cost Table

Base Skill

<i>New Skill Rating is...</i>	Active	Knowledge/Language
Less than or equal to Attribute Rating	1.5	1
Less than or equal to (2 x Attribute Rating)	2	1.5
More than (2 x Attribute Rating)	2.5	2

Specializations

<i>New Skill Rating is...</i>	Active	Knowledge/Language
Less than equal to Attribute Rating	0.5	0.5
Less than or equal to (2 x Attribute Rating)	1	1
More than (2 x Attribute Rating)	1.5	1.5

Specializations need to be improved with Good Karma as well. They do not increase automatically. Their costs are also on the table, but a specialization's rating may not be more than twice its base skill rating.

New skills may be bought at the cost of one point per skill. To begin a new specialization for that skill, or for any skill, you must pay for it at one level higher than the base skill. You may have multiple specializations per skill, up to a maximum equal to the base skill's rating.

Using your Karma Pool: First of all, unlike normal dice pools, the Karma Pool does not refresh every Combat Turn. Instead it is up to the GM to decide when these pools refresh, but it will refresh. There are certain circumstances where rules call for you to burn Karma. Unlike normal expenditures, when you choose to do this, you must permanently give up points from you pool.

The following list provides you with the basics of what your Karma Pool can do for you. In order to get the full story however, refer to pages 246-248 of SR3.

Using Your Karma Pool

Re-Rolling Failures	Player spends 1 Karma pt. to re-roll any dice that came up failures. Repeating this twice or more for the same check costs 2 pts. for the second try, 3 pts. for the third, and so on.
Avoiding An "Oops"	Players may spend 1 Karma pt. to turn the Rule of One into a simple failure.
Open Tests	Player spends an incremental amount of Karma pts. to re-roll dice from an open test. Re-roll 1: 1 Karma pt. Re-roll 2: 1 pt. for first, 2 pts. for the second, for a total of 3. And so on.
Buying Additional Dice	Player spends an incremental amount of Karma pts. for extra dice in any test, up to a max. equal to the number of dice (not from other pools) he is using. Buy 1: 1 Karma pt. Buy 2: 1 pt. for first, 2 pts. for the second, for a total of 3. And so on.
Buying Successes	Players may burn 1 Karma pt. to buy an automatic success if he has achieved at least one normal success. Players may buy as many successes as he wishes in this manner.
Extended Actions	Players may allocate Karma pool pts. to extended action skill checks. They must do this at the time the action begins, regardless of when the check is made.
The Hooper-Nelson Rule	At the GM's option, a player may reduce the target number of a check to a max of eight by burning 1 Karma pt. per point lowered.
Hand of God	At the GM's option, a player may burn ALL Karma, both Good Karma and Karma Pool, to avoid extreme circumstances (usually death). A character may only use this once, ever.