

# Witchwood Gameplay Primer

This document is adapted (abridged and reformatted) from the Witchwood Rulebook, 1.3.  
In case of questions, conflicts, or confusion, it is *superseded* by the full rulebook.

## Meta:

- **Caution** is a localized safety halt.
- **Emergency** is a game-wide safety halt.
- **Clarify** is to handle confusion.

## Vitality, Armor, and Damage:

- Damage goes against, in order:
  1. Virtual Armor
  2. Magic Armor
  3. Costume Armor
  4. Vitality
- Slay and Fireball skip armor to affect Vitality directly.
- Your last point of Vitality can only be taken by a **torso** hit or **magic damage**:
  - Regular weapon hits and Cleave must hit your torso to take you down.
  - Slay needs to hit your torso, anyway.
  - Dart spells, Strike spells, and Fireball spells are magic damage, and can take you down.
- A **helmet**, subject to approval, protects you from Subdue (respond "Ward").

## Unconsciousness:

- You can fall unconscious from:
  - reaching 0 Vitality
  - Subdue (which otherwise does no damage)
- You can wake up from:
  - 5 minutes passing since last torso/magic damage or Subdue
  - 1 minute of Tend to the torso
  - Awaken spell
- When you wake up, automatically heal to 1 Vitality, if you were at 0.
- Healing, alone, does not wake you up.
- Being poisoned, being dead, and being hit by a Sleep spell are all distinct from regular unconsciousness.

## Poisoned:

- When poisoned, fall unconscious in 5 seconds, and die in 5 minutes. You can get poisoned by:
  - Venom (weapon call)
  - Poison (spell)
  - Contact Poison (trap)
- Tend/Awaken do *not* wake you up.
- Purify in the first 5 seconds negates poisoning entirely.
- Purify after you are down removes the poison, but leaves you unconscious for the remainder of the 5 minutes (Tend or Awaken could wake you up faster).

## Death:

- You can die from:
  - Death Strike (willing or helpless)
  - Assassinate (surprise weapon call to torso)
  - Death (spell)
  - being poisoned for 5 minutes
- You are a corpse for 5 minutes, during which:
  - Restore Spirit fixes you: wake up at 1 Vitality.
  - Stall Eidolon resets the 5 minutes.
- After 5 minutes, become an **Eidolon**, walk to the **Gatekeeper's door**, and knock.
- As an Eidolon, respond "Ward, Eidolon" to everything (communication, hits, calls, etc.) *except*:
  - Speak with Dead
  - Stall Eidolon (allows followup touch/disk spells)
  - Dispel, Curse, Obliterate, and No Escape

## Calls and Delivery:

 only make 1 call per hit/spell.

- no machine-gunning (no faster than 1/sec)
- **Weapons** are blocked by shields and weapons.
  - A plain weapon hit does 1 point of damage. A hit with a call does *only* the call's effects.
  - **Surprise**: you are not surprised if:
    - You attempt to block or dodge the attack.
    - You are trying to avoid the attacker.
    - You are actively fighting the attacker.
  - A **projectile** hit does 1 damage, unless it hits loose clothing/hair but wouldn't hit you upon passing through.
- **Spells** work if they hit you or things you are holding, including shields/weapons/clothing.
  - Spellcasting requires empty hands (except packets or magic focus items).
  - **Spell packets** are thrown.
  - **Touch spells** require willing/helpless targets and 1 working arm.
  - **Disk spells** place/remove disks.
  - **By My Voice** specifies the target by voice.
- **Spellstriking** (casting via weapon) is *both* a weapon call and a spell: can be blocked/parried/resisted.

## Responses:

 these *resist* and *use up* your skill:

- **Resist**: A skill or resource was used.
- **Parry**: The Parry skill was used.
- **Ward**: The resistance is an active ability.
- **Immune**: The resistance is (semi)permanent.

Don't be a jerk! Play safe! Don't cheat! Stay in game!

**Basic Actions:** These require a *helpless* or *willing* victim. Don't touch anyone without permission, and avoid taboo or sexual interaction (e.g. don't search for or hide items in swimsuit areas).

**Examination:** Narrate or act out basic examination.

- Checking for a pulse, examining wounds, etc.
- Will tell if they are maimed, poisoned (weakening pulse), or dead (no pulse), but *not* how much damage they have taken.
- They can fake unconsciousness.

**Carrying:** To carry someone, say "I carry you."

- With permission you may (safely!) carry them.
- Or walk with your hands on their shoulders.
- Do not run while carrying someone.

**Searching:** Search by saying "I search you."

- If both of you are willing, actually search them.
- Or describe your search ("I check your pouch," "I search your shoes," etc.).
- When searched, give permission or respond with "describe your search."
- Hand over items at a reasonable pace.
- Don't take mundane props or weapons.
- Keep mundane weapons/items with "**prop.**"
- Reveal skill short-circuits searching.

**Restraints:** Bind someone with rope, manacles, etc.

- Loose enough out-of-game: can get out safely.
- In-game: they must be untied or unlocked.
- You may try to untie/unlock your own bonds.

**Death Strike:** "Death Strike 1, Death Strike 2, Death Strike 3" with weapon to torso.

- Interrupted if:
  - weapon leaves contact with the torso
  - victim moves
  - anything hits weapon
  - anyone attacks you
- Can kill with a skill:
  - Add call ("...Death Strike 3, Water Dart").
  - Call must inflict damage or death.
  - Use a spell packet to torso for spells.

**Physical Calls:** These require roleplaying with a willing or helpless target.

Call	Effect	Requires
<b>Tend</b>	Wake up, if Tended on the torso. Tend to a maimed/withered limb fixes it.	1min, willing or helpless target
<b>Reveal</b>	Hand over every in-game valuable on your person (even the Concealed ones).	willing or helpless target

**Weapon Calls:** These often depend on where they land.

Call	Effect	Notes
<b>Cleave</b>	Take 5 damage to the location hit.	must hit the torso to take last Vitality
<b>Disarm</b>	If a wielded weapon is hit, throw it 5 feet away, or release and don't use it for 5 seconds.	must hit weapon; doesn't work on shields
<b>Maim</b>	If a limb is hit, it becomes useless.	must hit a limb
<b>Slay</b>	If your torso is hit, drop to 0 Vitality (ignoring armor) and fall unconscious.	must hit torso; can't Parry; can take last Vitality
<b>Trip</b>	Fall to the ground (you may defend but not attack) for 5 seconds.	
<b>Venom</b>	Become poisoned.	see <i>Poisoned</i>

**Surprise Calls:** These require surprise. You can't Parry them.

Call	Effect	Hit Location
<b>Assassinate</b>	If your torso is hit by <i>surprise</i> , die instantly.	torso
<b>Subdue</b>	If hit on the center upper back by a close, <i>surprise</i> hit, fall unconscious. Call "Ward" if wearing a helmet.	center upper back

**Spells:** All spells, regardless of delivery, can be resisted as magic.

Call	Effect	Notes
<b>Dart</b>	Take 1 magic damage.	can take last Vitality
<b>Death</b>	Die instantly.	
<b>Fireball</b>	Drop to 0 Vitality (ignoring armor) and fall unconscious.	can take last Vitality
<b>Fumble</b>	Throw any held items (including a shield) 5 feet away, or release and don't use them for 5 seconds.	
<b>Gust</b>	Fall to the ground (you may defend but not attack) for 5 seconds.	
<b>Poison</b>	Become poisoned.	see <i>Poisoned</i>
<b>Strike</b>	Take 5 magic damage.	can take last Vitality
<b>Wither</b> <i>(limb)</i>	The stated limb (e.g. "Wither right arm") becomes useless.	

### Restorative Spells:

Call	Effect	Notes
<b>Awaken</b>	Wake up from unconsciousness, unless poisoned or dead.	
<b>Heal</b>	Regain 1 Vitality (or however many are stated, e.g. "Heal 5").	don't wake up
<b>Mend</b> <i>(limb)</i>	The stated maimed/withered limb is fixed.	
<b>Purify</b>	You cease to be poisoned.	see <i>Poisoned</i>
<b>Restore Spirit</b>	If dead, return to life, awake with 1 Vitality.	
<b>Un</b> <i>(spell)</i>	The stated duration spell (e.g. "Unroot" or "Unsilence") ends immediately.	

**Active Spells:** An active spell is an ongoing effect that can be dispelled. You can have only 1 of each active at a time. Disk spells are active while you have the disk.

Call	Effect	Notes
<b>Bloodshield</b>	Resist the next Venom, Poison, Contact Poison, or tag of type "poison."	active until used
<b>Oakskin</b>	Gain 3 points of magic armor.	active until all gone
<b>Spellshield</b>	You may call "Resist" to a single future magic effect. You may choose when to use it, even if unconscious, dead, or an Eidolon.	active until used
<i>(type)</i> <b>Shard</b>	If you are a dead corpse, take the disk and keep it until you visit the Gatekeeper.	disk spell; removed if you are restored to life

**Duration Spells:** All duration spells are active during their duration: they can be dispelled, and Un*(spell)* can end them. They do not stack with themselves, e.g. a second Root spell resets the duration.

Call	Effect	Notes
<b>Repel</b>	For 1 minute, you are driven away from the caster's initial location. Try to stay at least 50 feet away from (or out of line of sight of) the location; if you can't, maintain what distance you can.	don't run blindly away in a panic; may fight, think, move safely, etc.
<b>Root</b>	Any part of you touching the ground (or similar) is stuck for 5 minutes. If you are in mid-air when hit, whatever you land with becomes stuck.	
<b>Silence</b>	For 5 minutes, you can't speak, make verbal sounds, cast spells, or use powders / magical augments. You can still state weapon and physical calls for non-magical skills/augments.	may still use non-magical augments
<b>Sleep</b>	Fall asleep for 5 minutes.	wake from jostle/damage
<b>Speak with Dead</b>	If you are dead or an Eidolon, you may (but not must) speak for 5 minutes.	
<b>Stall Eidolon</b>	If you are a corpse, you will not turn into an Eidolon for 5 minutes. If you are an Eidolon, stay in place for up to 5 minutes, until the caster leaves or releases you — you can be affected by follow-on touch/disk spells.	see <i>Death</i>
<b>Weakness</b>	For 5 minutes, you can't use Parry, weapon calls, or non-magical augments.	may still use magical augments

**Special Calls:** Special calls can't be resisted through normal means (Spellshield, Parry, Circle, Repose, etc.).

Call	Effect	Notes
<b>Dispel</b> ( <i>spell</i> )	The stated active spell (e.g. "Dispel Root," "Dispel Circle," or "Dispel Oakskin") ends instantly. <b>Dispel Magic</b> ends any and all active spells.	
<b>I Curse Your Spirit</b>	A generic curse has no immediate effect; inform staff before checking out. A specific Curse, e.g. "I Curse Your Spirit, Root," takes immediate effect, and lasts until the duration ends or the Curse is lifted, destroyed, etc.; e.g. "I Curse Your Spirit, Silence" is not ended by Unsilence or Dispel Silence.	usually cast by voice
<b>Obliterate Spirit</b>	Kills you instantly and permanently (tell the Gatekeeper). Restore Spirit will not work on you.	
<b>There is No Escape</b>	You can't move more than 5 feet in any direction for 5 minutes. This effect ends early if the caster leaves line of sight.	usually cast by voice

**Traps:** Placing, moving, or breaking traps requires the **Device** skill or similar. If a single step or action sets off a number of the same kind of trap, treat them as 1 trap. Never forcibly rub contact poison on someone, throw popper traps, or physically force someone to set off a trap.

Trap	Effect	Notes
<b>Bubble Wrap Trap</b>	If you pop bubble wrap, fall over for 5 seconds, as if hit by a Trip.	not parryable
<b>Buzzer Trap</b>	An electronic buzzer (or anything that makes an obvious electronic sound) causes everyone within 5 feet to take a Fireball spell. This is resistible as a spell.	if still buzzing, repeats every 1min
<b>Contact Poison</b>	If you touch petroleum jelly with bare skin, or someone calls "Contact Poison" when you touch/search/examine/etc. them with bare hands, become poisoned. This is purifyable, resistible via Bloodshield, etc.	see <i>Poisoned</i>
<b>Popper Trap</b>	A popper or "bang snap" (tiny firework) going off causes the limb that set it off to become maimed. If you set it off with something unmaimable, pick an unmaimable limb to take the effect.	not parryable
<b>Weapon Trap</b>	A swinging, dropping, spring-loaded, or otherwise <i>autonomous</i> weapon has 3 effects: it Disarms any weapon it hits, Maims any limb it hits, and Slays any torso it hits.	blockable; Slay is retreatable; Disarm/Maim parryable

**Defensive Skills:** *None* of these skills work against special calls (Dispel, Curse, Obliterate, and No Escape).

**Physical Defenses:**

- **Parry** (requires a weapon) lets you respond "Parry" to any weapon call (melee, thrown, shot, etc.), including spellstrikes, except for Slay, Subdue, or Assassinate.
- **Iron Grip** lets you respond "Ward" to all Disarms and Fumbles, as long as you keep both hands on a single, lone weapon.
- **Retreat** lets you respond "Resist" to Slay, by taking 10 damage (which can go against armor, etc.).
- **Avoid Trap** lets you respond "Resist" to any single trap.
- **Conceal**, used on a item kept out of sight, lets you keep that item from being found by a search. Reveal will still find concealed items.
- A **helmet** lets you respond "Ward" to Subdue.

**Active Spells:** These can be dispelled.

- **Repose of Peace** lets you respond "Ward" to all hits, calls, and other interactions. Stand/sit/lie still with your arms crossed and hands/arms empty. It lasts until you speak or move — moving for safety reasons is OK. Don't block doors, etc.
- **Circle of Protection** lets you respond "Ward" to all hits, calls, and other interactions from outside. Inscribe a circle; the spell lasts for 5 minutes, and ends early if you step out, pass anything out, or attack/cast anything outside. The circle can only hold you. A Wizard's Staff allows you to cast spells out of a circle without breaking it.
- **Spellshield, Bloodshield, and Oakskin** are examples of basic active spells: you can usually have only 1 of each at a time.

**Surprise Skills:** These both require *surprise*, and neither can be done while running.

- **Subdue** must be a safe, soft, surprise pommel strike to the center upper back.
  - You must approach from behind or the side — do not reach around or hug from the front.
  - You may use the weapon's regular striking surface, for safety, if you are close enough to hit with a regular pommel strike. Do not strike with force.
- **Assassinate** requires a surprise hit to the torso.