CARD TACTICS

Rulebook, 1st edition

Card Tactics is (supposed to be) a challenging game. Not only your team of heroes and items will enable different strategies, but events will also "mess up" with the course of the adventure. Learning the enemy's skills and patterns is the key to success- and that takes some time. Experience, strategy and the ability to anticipate the enemy's actions will exponentially raise the chances of victory.
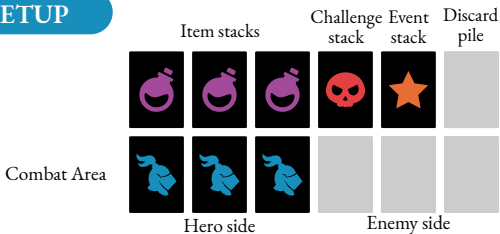
Objective: Win five increasingly-difficult combats using chosen heroes. Items and events will add options and unexpected challenges. The game ends if at any point all heroes reach zero health.

Components: 66 playing cards, 56 tokens and 2 dice.

Item stacks   Challenge stack   Event stack   Discard pile

Combat Area

Hero side   Enemy side

1. Make 3 stacks of **items**, one for each rarity (**Common, Rare, Unique** – shuffle each one individually);

2. Make an **Event** stack (shuffle);

3. Make a **boss/enemy Challenge** stack starting by piling the cards face down in the following order (shuffle each group of cards individually but don't look at them):

> \+ 3 Unique Enemy cards, then;
> \+ 1 Unique Boss card;
> \+ 2 Unique Enemy cards;
> \+ 1 Rare Boss card;
> \+ 5 Rare Enemy cards;
> \+ 1 Common Boss card;
> \+ 5 Common Enemy cards;
> Discard unused Enemy/Boss cards.

4. Choose 3 **heroes** and draw 3 Common items (see **Items** on page 4). Discard 1 of the items and the heroes not chosen;

5. Position the heroes on the **Combat Area** and add health (♥) tokens to the same amount number on the hero's card.

Combat Area

Also referred to as "Combat", consists of an imaginary horizontal line separated in the center: the three spaces on the left are the hero side, while the three spaces on the right side are the enemy side (**bosses follow the same rules**).

Each occupied space counts as 1 (one) for measuring range. No space can ever be left empty between the center and a unit or between two units; when that happens, all units are **Pulled** (does not count as movement, see example). Heroes can never enter the enemy side and vice-versa.

In the example, both the Alchemist and the Wolf are defeated. The Pyromancer is Pulled occupying the space adjacent to the Guardian, while both Orc and Orc Chieftain are Pulled (doesn't count as movement).

MECHANICS

Defense

Health

Quirk
Once per action when making an attack roll, Ranger can re-roll one dice (keep new result)

Skill's name — Long Shot [⚔ 4-5] — Allows movement

Skill description — ✖, on hit ✦+1 to one ally

Tactical Advantage [⚔ 1-3] — Range

Carol Tactics (2021) art by Victor Costa

Self, Unit, Hero, Enemy and Ally (terminology)

Self refers to the unit that is acting. Unit refers to any hero, enemy (including boss) card. Ally refers to other cards of the same type as the one that is acting, but not including the card itself (for example: Orc Chieftain's War Drums skill affects "allies", meaning all enemies except Orc Chieftain).

Skills are represented by the flag-like blocks of text on hero, item and enemy cards. Each card has up to two skills available. When using a skill, follow its description applying each effect in order, separated by a period ("."). If an instruction cannot be completed (for example, moving a unit that is **Restrained**), stop the skill immediately (ignoring any further phrases on the text right below the skill's name) and end that unit's action. That means units might be stopped from using a portion or all the effects on their skills if under the right conditions.

Quirks are represented by the first block of text below a hero, item or enemy illustration on their cards. Quirks are effects that will take place based on specific conditions, sometimes during another unit's action. Since heroes, items and enemies can have quirks, all of them should be paid attention to when in game. Item quirks will only take place when such an item is used.

Attacking, Hit and Critical Hit

When attacking (✖), choose a target then roll the two dice and add any numeric value attached to it (example, ✖+1 adds one to the roll) and ✒+ or ✒- tokens to the result. If it is equal or higher than the target's ▉, it loses 1 ♥ (hit). If the result is equal or higher to DOUBLE the target's ▉, it instead loses 2 ♥ (critical hit). "On hit/critical hit" includes extra

effects beside losing ♥, and sometimes instead of losing ♥.

Some attacks target more than one unit. If an attack has more than one target, roll once and resolve each target in order from closest to the attacker, then second closest etc.

Losing or Recovering Health, and Defeat

Use ♥ tokens to track the amount of health each unit has left. Heroes or enemies with zero ♥ are defeated. Hits and critical hits make a unit lose ♥. When a unit is healed, they recover a given number of ♥. The initial ♥ value on the card cannot be surpassed.

Range (written in [ ] beside the skill's name) indicates which unit(s) can be targeted by a particular skill (from a hero or item). Enemies do not use range, instead describing the target on their skill's text. Range is represented by the archer icon 🏹 followed by a number (0 for self, 1 for adjacent, 2 for two spaces afar to either direction etc. 1-2 means one OR two etc). Range does not discriminate heroes from enemies.

The image on the left shows the current Range when deciding which skill (from a hero or an item) is available to use based on the Alchemist's position in Combat.

Items

Keep drawn items below the Combat Area (alternatively, keep non-**Exhausted** items in hand). There's no limit of items carried on a given playthrough. Any item can be used by spending a hero's action (on that particular hero's time to act on a round), unless stated otherwise. Follow the item's

description including its own quirk and skill (if the item has more than one skill available, choose only one of them to use). Like heroes and enemies, items that are not Discarded after use are Exhausted (unless stated otherwise), and become available again on the next round.

Positioning and Movement

Movement happens by **Pulling** (going towards the center of combat) or **Pushing** (going away from the center of combat). This happens as part of a skill effect (for example the Guardian's Shield Bash will Push the target on a hit) used by a unit or against it. When present in a skill's flag, each boot icon ✦ indicates that one Push/Pull can be made by that unit (for moving), making allied units switch positions; movement in this manner can happen before or after acting on its description (for example, the Pyromancer can Move before OR after using Fire Punch).

As part of the Sticky Granade skill, Alchemist Pulls (Moves) by switching places with Guardian. This does not count as movement to the Guardian.

TOKENS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

Tokens can be obtained from skills and as part of item effects and Events. Each token has a specific trigger that will describe when it is used (non-optional). Tokens are discarded after being used unless stated otherwise.

Health (♥). See Losing or Recovering Health, and Defeat on page 4.

🏹 and 🛡 *(stackable, triggers when Attacking or being Attacked, discarded after use)*

Attack and Defense modifiers (+1 or -1 each token). Use them as soon as an attack happens and discard all tokens of that kind. For example: if a unit has any 🏹 tokens, use them all when making an attack roll (⚔) with that unit. If a unit is being attacked and has any number of 🛡 tokens, use them all when checking whether the attack hits.

Bleed *(stackable, triggers after unit acts, discarded after used or by healing)*

At the end of the unit's action, if any Bleed token is on that unit, discard 1 Bleed token and lose 1 ♥. Each ♥ healed (at any point) will also discard 1 Bleed token.

Counter *(non-stackable, triggers when attacked, discarded after use)*

When attacked, after resolving that unit's attack (and if the target is not defeated or stunned), use their total attack roll (dice roll plus any modifiers) against the attacker. Discard Counter token after use. Stunned or defeated units cannot Counter. Counters do not trigger counters. Units can only have one Counter token at a time.

Restrain and **Stun** *(incremental, triggers during unit's action, discarded by healing or at the end of that unit's action)*

When affected by **Restrain**, the unit cannot 🏃

(Push/Pull self) as part of its action (it can still be Pushed or Pulled -moved- by any other unit). The Restrain token is discarded at any point the affected unit is healed for any amount of ❤ or at the end of their action. If affected by Restrain while already under the effect of a Restrain token, discard Restrain tokens and add a Stun token in its place.

Stunned units cannot act at all and have to skip their action. The Stun token is discarded after skipping that unit's action or at any point it is healed at least 1❤, turning it into a Restrain token. Stun tokens do not stack. Finally, Stunned units cannot Counter.

Special Tokens *(Hound, Guard Dog, Dragon Shield)*
A few items have unique tokens to keep track of their effects. Look for the item's illustration on the tokens.

GAME PHASES (Overview)

Starting a new phase ends the previous one. Heroes start the game on the **Camp Phase**. During Camp they can use certain items and move (change positions) at will. After leaving Camp, go to the **Event Phase**, drawing an Event card and following its description. Then proceed to the **Combat Phase**.

After combat, if at least one hero is not defeated, enter the **Treasure Phase**, then back to Camp (repeating the process again from the start until the combat involving the Unique Boss is completed).

Camp Phase

Upon entering Camp, any defeated hero comes back with 1 ♥. During the Camp Phase heroes can freely change positions and may be able to use specific items (check items description). No tokens (except ♥) are carried over at the end of this phase. When done, move to the Event Phase.

Event Phase

As soon as leaving Camp, draw an Event card and follow its description. Then enter the Combat Phase.

Combat Phase

Start: Reveal the top three cards from the Challenge stack, adding them to the enemy side of the Combat Area in the following order: Closest to the center, second closest to the center and third closest to the center. Add the appropriate number of ♥ tokens to each enemy (or boss) based on the ♥ value on each card. Follow combat rules respecting the round order (see next step);

Round actions (alternates between hero and enemy side of Combat):

1) Select and execute an action for the farthest **hero** from the center that hasn't acted yet (see step 3 below). After acting, Exhaust that hero (and any used item that was not Discarded) by rotating its card 90 degrees. An Exhausted card stays rotated and cannot be used again until the end of the round unless stated otherwise;

2) Perform the action for the farthest **enemy/boss** from the center that hasn't acted (see step 4 below), based on its current position. Exhaust the enemy card after performing its action;

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3) Perform **one action** for each unit (hero or enemy), switching acting sides and always using the farthermost unit from the center that hasn't acted yet, until all heroes and enemies have been Exhausted;

4) When all heroes and enemies have been Exhausted, the **round ends**. Rotate all the Exhausted cards back to their original orientation and start a new round;

\# During each **hero**'s time to act, choose one: use hero skill, use item or Skip action. Be mindful of the ✕ (Range) of each skill, as it indicates which units can be affected by its description. Also be mindful of tokens like Stun or Restrain that directly affect the heroes (and enemies) capabilities;

\# During each **enemy**'s (or boss) time to act, follow their card descriptions depending on which position they currently are (if 3rd closest to the center of combat, use second skill; otherwise use first skill). Note that after only two enemies are left in combat, none of them will be able to use their second skill. Be mindful of their quirks and use them accordingly;

\# The two basic movement types are **Pull** (going towards the center) and **Push** (going away from the center). Pull(2) or Push(2) refers to doing it twice. Units switch positions when moving. Heroes always stay on their side of combat, and the same goes for enemies;

\# If a hero is **defeated** (reaches zero ♥), set aside that card (for enemy or boss, discard it). As heroes/enemies are defeated, the remaining units are automatically pulled towards the center (see Combat Area on page 1);

\# The **combat ends** when at least one hero is undefeated and all enemies are defeated. When that happens, move to the Treasure Phase. If all heroes are defeated, end the game immediately.

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Treasure Phase

After successfully ending a combat, draw items from their respective stacks accordingly:

- If a boss was present in the latest combat: 1 Common, 1 Rare and 1 Unique item;
- Otherwise: 2 Common items and 1 Rare item.

Endgame Condition

The game ends in **victory** when the heroes successfully defeat the Dragon and other enemies present in the fifth combat (which might leave zero to three cards left on the Challenge stack). The game can end prematurely if in any combat all heroes are **defeated**.

I've beaten the Dragon, what now?

First off, congratulations! Besides playing again with different heroes and facing a new Challenge stack, you're encouraged to create your own game setups. Some ideas: survival mode, without camp between combats; cooperative mode with other player(s), competitive mode against other player(s) etc. It might demand some tweaking, but Card Tactics's mechanics are built to be flexible outside the "standard" setup found in this manual. Oh, and please reach out and share new and challenging ways of playing you do create!

**Frequently Asked Questions and
Learn more at: cardtactics.com**

CHEAT SHEET

Combat Phase

- Alternates between hero and enemy side;
- Farthest (non-Exhausted) unit from center acts;
- Heroes' action: use skill, use item or skip action. Exhaust card(s) after use;
- Enemies' action: use skill based on position. Exhaust afterwards;
- Before, during and after acting with a unit, check quirks and tokens (on all units) that might affect the action.

Tokens and Special Effects

Health (units with zero ♥ are immediately defeated);

🗡 and 🛡 (stackable, triggers when Attacking or being Attacked, discarded after use);

Bleed (stackable, triggers after unit acts, discarded after used or by healing);

Counter (non-stackable, triggers when attacked, discarded after use);

Restrain and **Stun** (incremental, triggers during unit's action, discarded by healing or at end of unit's action).

Attacking, Hit and Critical Hit

When attacking ⚔, choose a target then roll the two dice and add any numeric value attached to it as well as any 🗡 modifiers. If equal to or higher than the target's 🛡 value, it hits (critical hit if double or higher).

Range

[🏃1] 🏃○ [🏃1-3]

[🏃1] [🏃2] [🏃3] [🏃4]

Movement