

# **RUNNING WITH ADDICTION**

by Logan Z. Hill

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>ONE MORE ROUND</b>	<b>1</b>	Nicotine	10
<b>JUST A TASTE</b>	<b>2</b>	Tempo	10
<b>RULES</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>INSUBSTANTIAL SUBSTANCES</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>THE BASICS</b>	<b>4</b>	Augmentation Addiction	11
Addiction Terms	4	Dietary Addiction	11
Using	5	Gambling Addiction	11
Addicted And Using	5	Sex Addiction	12
SIN Verification Software	9	Self-Harm/Risk-Prone Behavior	12
The Monkey On Your Back	5	<b>MAGIAL SUBSTANCES</b>	<b>12</b>
Getting Clean	6	Foci	12
Rehab	6	<b>SIM SUBSTANCES</b>	<b>13</b>
Speedballing And Overdosing	6	<b>ESSENCE DRAIN</b>	<b>13</b>
Addiction Negative Quality	6	<b>SUBSTANCE TABLES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ADDICTION EXAMPLES</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>QUICK &amp; DIRTY ADDICTION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SUBSTANCES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>RULES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>QUICK FIX: ADDICTION NEGATIVE</b>	<b>15</b>
Alcohol	10	<b>QUALITY</b>	<b>15</b>
Caffeine	10	<b>QUICK FIX: GETTING ADDICTED</b>	<b>15</b>
		<b>QUICK FIX: GETTING CLEAN</b>	<b>15</b>

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## ONE MORE ROUND

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“Will!” the ork yelled over the throng of people surrounding the dirt and blood stained fighting cage. The two men inside were slick with sweat, bruised and bloodied, and staggering in exhaustion as they circled each other. “Will!” the ork yelled again but the cowboy magician didn’t notice; he was shouting at the fighters as the crowd jostled him in the depths of their proto-mosh pit.

*Damn it, Will,* the voice of the ork popped up over the AR being piped into the magician’s brain through the trodes of his wide-brimmed hat.

*What, Mekajiki?* The trodes translated Will’s thoughts into speech which his commlink sent in reply.

*We’ve found our mark, it’s time to move in on him.*

*But I have a grand riding on this fight, just one more round!*

*We have to move now. He’s moving out to the parking lot. Come on, Will!*

Will’s fist clenched, relaxed, clenched again. He started to back out of the excited crowd then one of the combatants in the cage began throwing a flurry of punches at his opponent and the crowd screamed in joy. Will stopped then moved forward to get a better view. *Just one more round!*

*Damn it, Will!* Mekajiki turned towards the nearest exit and messaged the rest of the team, *Will’s out. Fuck him. If he’s in that deep with the Mafia, we might as well cut him loose.*

*What?! We need the extra magic backup on this one,* Moondancer messaged back in plain-text.

*Fuck the cowboy,* Coda replied. From his vantage point he could see their mark coming out of the building with his bodyguards by his side, *Only two friends with him, I can take them easy.*

*Hold,* Piter’s voice came over their comms with a deep resonance that they only heard when he spoke through the Matrix. *Wait for Mekajiki to get into position and I need to get one more mark on the target’s commlink.*

*Fine,* Code shot back sharply.

Mekajiki took one more look over his shoulder at Will who was consumed wholly in the action in the cage. “Never run with a junkie,” he whispered to himself and then hurried into position with the rest of the team.

## JUST A TASTE

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- > If you're looking for information on how BTLs will ruin and run your life, the *Sim Dreams & Nightmares* post is still available in the archives.  
This here is more of an open forum on what it's like to run with addicts. Things to know, watch out for, and maybe even how to get a chummer clean.  
So have at it.
- > Slamm-0!
- > If you've been in this business for as long as I have, then you know that it's only a matter of time before you end up on a run with someone who is far too reliant on drugs or other similar crutches.  
It's not about whether they are dangerous to you and your job, because they are. It's about you doing your homework on them to make the call whether the risk is worth your hoop.
- > Bull
- > Time to get off your low-rez lawn? Isn't it prudent to just not work with drug addicts?
- > /dev/grrl
- > Addicts aren't just about the drugs or BTLs.
- > Slamm-0!
- > What's that supposed to mean?
- > /dev/grrl
- > You still owe me for the Mariner's win, little miss rebel.
- > Slamm-0!
- > Addiction is more about the brain of the addict than the substances themselves.
- > Chainmaker
- > Tell that to a first-time user of nitro!
- > Bull
- > There is no black and white here, people. It's partially the natural neurochemistry of a person's brain, partially with learned behavior, and it also has a lot to do with the drug, BTL, or addictive action.  
Any number of factors can all come together in a person that pushes them over the edge. But those same factors for someone else, nothing. For some it's that first taste that sets off the addiction. Others, they can go years of recreational use and then one day...maybe a loved one dies, maybe a divorce, maybe just a bad day at work, or maybe their body becomes physically dependant on the substance and the switch is flipped. Point being, you take the risk every single time you use.
- > Butch
- > What, even with soycaf or things like gambling or sex? Please. Some people are just weak.
- > Clockwork
- > I had a client. Calm. Collected. Focused. A razor-sharp mind. One of the top corporate sharks in the Seattle tank. Nothing could swerve him from his goals. Nothing except sex. In a month he became a regular.  
After a slow week I called him to see if he wanted to schedule something. He said he was, well, across the Pond, in meetings. I let it go. Ten minutes later he called to schedule an appointment in eight hours.  
I found that just about any time I called he would say no, hang up, and minutes later be out the door and on his way. It was flattering at first. But after six months he began calling daily. He'd get angry if I couldn't meet up. He'd always collect himself and apologize. But after a couple of weeks of that, when I started turning him down more and more, he began asking for other workers. I gave him a couple of names but warned the women that he could get intense.
- > SeaTAC Sweetie
- > That's great inside info on the guy should anyone ever need it. People, especially that old D.C. crowd, pay a lot for that kind of data.
- > Kay St. Irregular
- > Most organized crime outfits see a lot of substance use, especially among their low ranking solders. And while most say they don't use the stuff they sell...don't believe it. There's always a handful at least that test their own product on a regular basis, especially if it gives them a leg up in beating down the opposition.
- > Haze
- > Most of the higher ups in the syndicates look down on substance abuse though. Most. If you're known to be an addict it's far more likely you'll be sent on a suicide mission than get made.
- > Bull
- > And you can bet your last nuyen that if you're running with a relative nobody that's addicted they're likely ex-syndicate that got lucky and made it out.
- > Slamm-0!

- > I'll take that bet. From what I've seen, it's mostly gangers and street-thugs with addiction that end up trying to becoming shadowrunners.
- > /dev/grrl
- > And you still aren't seeing the problem?
- > Slamm-0!
- > The longer someone's been clean, the more trust you can give them. But it never really sets to zero. That throttle is always revving somewhere in the back of an addict's mind.
  - So if you're running with an addict, and you know it, don't make it difficult for them. Meet at a McHugh's rather than a bar if someone on your team has a problem with alcohol. Use them as a lookout down the street if the Johnson calls a meet at a local watering hole.
  - If they're professional and clean, then you probably don't have to worry if the situation forces them into a location like that, but if you can work them around it, do so. They won't be distracted by the rows of bottles behind the bar and you won't be distracted with thoughts about just how distracted they are.
- > Turbo Bunny
- > And how's the BTL habit, Trubo?
- > Hard Exit
- > Good days and bad, but haven't touched the stuff in a long time.
- > Turbo Bunny
- > Good to hear.
- > Hard Exit
- > Don't overlook getting help. There's anonymous street meetings that can help you get clean (or help you deal with just about anything else that's afflicting you) and if you have the money to spend there's rehab clinics too, though people in our line of work rarely have the luxury of being able to take off a month from work.
- > Sunshine
- > FFS, Sunshine! At least mention to vet the place if you're going to check out of the real world for that long. Seemed like practically every rehab clinic in the Pacific Northwest in the 2050s was a bug's hive. And I can point to two in Seattle in the past few years that were beyond shady (an AIPS recovery clinic that was feeding technos to, I think, MCT and a BTL clinic with a high rate of suicides and organlegger visitors if you must know), not to mention the regular shady groups that just take your money, give some Easter-egg dyed aspirins, and kick you out after a couple of weeks.
- > Haze
- > You are not incorrect, Haze. Vet the place. It's been a long week and I figured that's a no-brainer for the likes of Jackpoint.
- > Sunshine

# RULES

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The following fleshes out, attempts to clarify, and expand upon the existing addiction rules in Shadowrun, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

## THE BASICS

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### ADDICTION TERMS

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The terms for addictive substances are as follows with italicized terms being new. For in depth descriptions of preexisting terms, see Shadowrun 5<sup>th</sup> Edition core rulebook, pg 408. The new terms are not new rules, but instead are coined so as make referencing what they describe easier.

**Addiction Cycle:** The period of time between Cravings (see below) for a character with an Addiction Negative Quality as defined by the addiction's level.

**Addiction Rating:** The relative strength of the substance on a users system (psychologically, physiologically, or both). It determines the substance's Window (see below) and how long it takes to Dry Out (see below).

**Addiction Test:** The test used when dealing with addiction and addictive substances, which is either Body + Willpower or Logic + Willpower (or both, see Addiction Type) with a threshold equal to the substance's Addiction Threshold. Withdrawal Tests are a specific type of Addiction Test.

**Addiction Type:** Whether the substance is addictive psychologically, physiologically, or both. Psychological substances are resisted with Logic + Willpower. Physiological substances are resisted with Body + Willpower. Those that are both require two separate tests.

**Addiction Threshold:** This number indicates how dangerous (addictive) the substance is. It sets the base threshold for all Addiction Tests when dealing with the substance. During the Window (see below), for each week that a character refrains from using that substance the Addiction Threshold is reduced by 1. Any use of that substance during the Window resets the Addiction Threshold (which will again be reduced by 1 for each week of abstinence after the first until the end of the Window)

**Clean:** A character is considered Clean if they have never used the substance before or if they have, then they have gotten clean (having, Dried Out, exited a substance's Window, and paid the appropriate Karma; see the Getting Clean section).

**Craving:** The point in time, at the end of an Addiction Cycle, where a character with an Addiction Negative Quality must choose to either get a Fix or resist using by making a Withdrawal Test (see below).

**Dry/Drying Out:** The time that it takes to get clean, which is equal to the substance's Addiction Rating in weeks.

**Duration:** The length of time that the Effects (see below) last for the user.

**Effect:** Lists the effects the substance has, if any.

**First Use:** The point in time when a character uses a substance and is not within the Window (see below) of a previous use of that substance. First Use sets the beginning of a new Window (see below).

**Fix:** The number of doses or hours of habit-related activity as defined by the level of the character's Addiction Negative Quality that are needed to satisfy a Craving.

**Power:** If the substance has toxin-like effects, typically those that cause Stun or Physical damage, then its Power (base DV) is listed here.

**Speed:** The time that it takes for the substance's Effects (if any) to take affect on the user.

**Substance:** A catch-all term for anything that a person can get addicted to and includes; drugs, foci, hot sim VR, BTLs, and activities (gambling, sex, etc.).

**Vector:** How the substance is typically used.

**Weeks of Safe Use:** The number of weeks, from the start of a Window (see below), that a character can freely use a substance with the Addiction Threshold still being reduced to 0 by the end of the Window. Any uses after the Weeks of Safe Use will cause the Window's threshold to be greater than 0.

**Window:** This is the length of time, from First Use, that the substance's addictiveness lasts (not necessarily its physical traces). A Window is equal to  $11 - \text{Addiction Rating}$  in weeks. For each week that passes in a Window, the substance's Addiction Threshold is reduced by 1. At the end of the substance's Window, the character must succeed on an Addiction Test if the Addiction Threshold is still greater than 0, or else they become addicted (or the level of their current Addiction worsens). If the Addiction Rating is 11 or greater then the Window is 1 day (24 hours).

**Withdrawal:** The effects suffered after a failed Withdrawal Test for those with an Addiction Negative Quality as listed in the Quality's description.

**Withdrawal Test:** A specific Addiction Test made when you have an Addiction Negative Quality to resist the substance's Craving and avoid the effects of Withdrawal at the end of an Addiction Cycle. Psychological substances are resisted with Logic + Willpower. Physiological substances are resisted with Body + Willpower. Those that are both require two separate tests. Failure of this (or both) test(s) subjects the character to Withdrawal or the character can choose to satisfy the Craving (thereby creating a new Window or resetting the Addiction Threshold of a current Window and Overdosing if the character is currently at the Severe or Burnout level).

## USING

When you use an addictive substance you risk becoming addicted. The following list outlines the steps to keep track of when using an addictive substance (with the Addiction Negative Quality or not). The steps apply individually for each substance you use.

- The first time you use an addictive substance note the day you used, this is the First Use date.
- From that date, find the end date of the substance's Window (11 – Addiction Rating weeks).
- If the Window is greater than or equal to the substance's Addiction Threshold then you know you will not have to make an Addiction Test at the end of the Window as the Addiction Threshold is reduced by 1 each week and will be 0 by the end of the Window.
- If the Window is less than the substance's Addiction Threshold then you know you will have to make an Addiction Test at the end of the Window (though the Addiction Threshold is still reduced by 1 each week so the threshold to the test may be lower than the substance's base Addiction Threshold).
- If you use the substance again at any time during the Window period the Addiction Threshold is reset during the week that it is used (and reduces by 1 on each of the following weeks, if any). However, the Window is not reset.
- If on the last day of the Window, if the Addiction Threshold is less than 0 then you are considered Clean again (or your Addiction Negative Quality doesn't risk getting worse if you're already addicted).
- If on the last day of the Window the Addiction Threshold is 1 or greater then you must make an Addiction Test (or Tests) based on that substance's Addiction Type with a threshold equal to the final week's modified Addiction Threshold.
- If you succeed on that test then you are considered Clean again (or your Addiction Negative Quality doesn't get worse).
- If you fail then you gain the Mild Addiction Negative Quality to that substance or you gain the next, worse, level of the Addiction Negative Quality if you are already addicted.

## ADDICTED AND USING

Once you have an Addiction Negative Quality apply the following rules in addition to the Using rules, above.

- Set the date for your Cravings; which you can choose at character creation or determine it by the date of the failed Addiction Test that gave you the Addiction Negative Quality.
- At the start of each Addiction Cycle you must choose to either get a Fix or resist the Cravings and risk Withdrawal.
- If you choose to get a Fix then the rules for Using begin (if not already active for that substance).
- If you choose to resist Withdrawal, you must make a Withdrawal Test (or tests if both psychological and physiological) against a threshold equal to the base Addiction Threshold for the substance to which you are addicted.
- If you fail the Withdrawal Test(s) you must get a Fix or suffer Withdrawal. You suffer the Addiction Negative Quality effects until you get a fix and once you get that Fix the Using rules are then applied.
- If you succeed on the Withdrawal Test you do not suffer from Withdrawal, don't have to get a Fix, and can choose to try and get Clean or keep on track for getting Clean if already doing so.

The Addiction Cycles & Craving (Doses or Hours) table below lists the severities of the Addiction Negative Quality, their Addiction Cycle, and the number of doses or hours of habit-related activity needed to satisfy a Fix.

ADDICTION CYCLES & DOSES/HOURS		
SEVERITY	CYCLE	CRAVING (DOSES OR HOURS)
Mild	1 month	1
Moderate	2 weeks	1
Severe	1 week	2
Burnout	1 day	3

## THE MONKEY ON YOUR BACK

The framework for addiction rules gives consistent in-game consequences for the Negative Quality. In addition to the base rules, the GM should feel free to have a character with the Addiction Negative Quality make an Addiction Test to resist using when ever they are sufficiently stressed and encountering temptation as appropriate to their addiction level.

Having characters make Addiction Tests when their players aren't choosing to have them use or not during Withdrawal or end of Window Tests should not be abused by the GM and should have milder overall effects; such as failure on a roll and use of the substance does not open a Window or reset the current Window's threshold for those with a mild addiction, or use a lower

Addiction Threshold for those with severe or burnout addictions.

## GETTING CLEAN

In order to get clean of a substance, you must satisfy three conditions: get clear of a Window, make it through the Drying Out period, and pay Karma.

- You must succeed on the Addiction Test(s) at the end of the substance's Window (if the threshold has been reduced to 0 by the end of the Window then you automatically succeed on this test).
- You must have refrained from using the substance for a number of weeks equal to its Addiction Rating and succeed on an Addiction Test at the end of that timeframe, with a threshold equal to the substance's base Addiction Threshold.
- If you have met both of these conditions, on the last test of the two made, you can spend Karma equal to the post-character-creation cost of the Addiction to remove the addiction or spend Karma equal to the difference between the current addiction level and a lower level to become less addicted to that substance.

## REHAB

Characters can choose to get help in fighting, or at least managing, their addictions. Making and committing to getting help comes with costs however, in the form of time, nuyen, and even tracking in databases. Help is there for those with SINs, but the SINless face a harsher world.

The following systems can be used to help a character get clean or even just maintain their level of addiction (though there will always be the social pressure within these systems for the character to get, and stay, clean).

Lifestyles, in and of themselves, offer no additional protections or hindrances to getting clean. The addict knows how to work the system that they are in and will have surrounded themselves with the triggers of their abuse. That is, until they choose to get clean.

**Support Groups:** Joining a support group is free but takes 4 hours per week of the character's time. Using a support group for a full month gives a +1 dice pool bonus to Addiction Tests, regardless of whether the character has used during that time or not. As long as the character continues to go to their support group meetings they will continue to receive the +1 dice pool bonus after the first month. Missing a week causes the character to have to go for another full month before the bonus returns.

**Rehab Clinics:** Checking into a rehab clinic is the best option for characters trying to get clean, but they cost nuyen and remove the character from normal life (including shadowrunning, mostly, see below). The cost of rehab is based on Lifestyle costs, but there are no

Street or Squatter rehab levels (those are essentially covered by Support Groups).

Each level of Rehab's cost is in addition to the character's current Lifestyle costs if they want to keep their current residence available for them when they get out of rehab. Characters can choose to abandon their current Lifestyles in order to save money, but after month(s) of not working they may find it hard to afford a place when they get out of rehab.

The rehab costs, Addiction Test dice pool bonuses, and Threshold modifiers by level are listed in the table below.

REHAB LEVELS			
LEVEL	DP BONUS	THRESHOLD MODIFIER	COST PER MONTH
Low	+4	0	3,000¥
Medium	+4	-1*	7,500¥
High	+6	-1*	15,000¥
Luxury	+8	-2*	50,000+¥

\*Threshold can not be lowered below 1.

Checking in to rehab is essentially checking out as a shadowrunner. To check into a rehab without a legal SIN requires bribing the staff (spending at least 10% of the base cost per month) or having a Fake SIN that passes their background checks. Once in, the character is monitored, watched, recorded, observed, and made to engage in group and one-on-one therapy sessions on a daily basis. If a character sneaks out or bribes his way out so as to go on a run (or anything else), their dice pool bonus is cut in half for that month and they do not receive the threshold modifier from rehab in addition to exposing themselves to stressful situations, locations, and people that may cause them to use again.

Historically, since at least the 2050's, rehab clinics and other similar social centers tend to be a favored front for insect spirits.

## SPEEDBALLING AND OVERDOSING

See Shadowrun 5<sup>th</sup> Edition core rulebook, page 415 for rules on overdosing. See the sidebar in Chrome Flesh, page 176, for rules on speedballing/mixing drugs.

Note that to satisfy the Cravings for severe or burnout level Addiction Negative Qualities (2 or 3 doses, respectively) the character must Overdose (SR5, pg 415).

## ADDICTION NEGATIVE QUALITY

Not all substances are created equal. Many are extremely dangerous and lead characters down the path to burning out. Other substances are far less dangerous and can not lead to Severe or Burnout Addictions; like soycaf, nicotine, (see below) and betel (see Chrome Flesh, gp 180). Characters who select these substances at character creation for their addictions only receive half the listed bonus Karma. Likewise, characters that are addicted to them and wish to get Clean only pay half the normal amount to due so.

### ADDICTION EXAMPLE: JOHN "WAGESLAVE" DOE

CALENDAR	
1 <sup>st</sup> First Use, day 0.	As a typical low-level corporate drone, John starts to escape his boringly oppressive life by using Moodchip BTLs (Addiction Rating 6, Addiction Threshold 2). All his Attributes are Rating 3. John's Window closes at the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> week, and threshold will reduce to 0 by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week.
1 <sup>st</sup> week, days 1-7.	John uses again on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day after his first use, so his threshold will be 0 on day 17 in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> week.
2 <sup>nd</sup> week, days 8-14.	John uses again on day 10, threshold will now be 0 on day 24 of the 4 <sup>th</sup> week.
3 <sup>rd</sup> week, days 15-21.	John uses again on day 17, threshold will now be 0 on day 31 of the 5 <sup>th</sup> week. If John stops here he will not have to make an Addiction Test at the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> week.
4 <sup>th</sup> week, days 22-28.	John uses yet again on day 24, which means the threshold will be 1 by the end of the Window.
5 <sup>th</sup> week, days 29-35.	Despite warnings from his manager that his performance is slipping, John uses again on day 30. The Window closes on day 35 where he has to make an Addiction Test, threshold 2. He rolls 6 dice and only gets one hit. He now has the Addiction Negative Quality at Mild. The GM sets John's Addiction Cycle at the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> week and decides to use a 4-week monthly cycle for easy bookkeeping (otherwise John could keep track of the months for his Cravings). Since John failed the test he has to satisfy his Craving for the month now or suffer the -2 penalty to Mental-related tests for the month, which he does. Since this is the last day of the window, it does not open a new one, but he must stay off the BTLs for 6 weeks (end of the 11 <sup>th</sup> week) to attempt to Get Clean.
6 <sup>th</sup> week, days 36-42.	Now that John is addicted, and his performance reviews are in the tank, he decides to Get Clean and doesn't use this week. He is not in a BTL window and can spend Karma to get clean at the end of the 11 <sup>th</sup> week if he succeeds on the tests.
7 <sup>th</sup> week, days 43-49.	John keeps his head down and makes it through the week.
8 <sup>th</sup> week, days 50-56.	His manager has been on his ass all week, but John stays away from the Moodchips.
9 <sup>th</sup> week, days 57-63.	Keeping himself clean for the last month has been tough but John's done it. At the end of this week his Addiction Cycle is up and he has to make his Withdrawal Test. He rolls his 6 dice and gets only 1 hit. The corporate propaganda is strong, Bee-Good At You Job!, so John decides to take the -2 penalty for the month.
10 <sup>th</sup> week, days 64-70.	While not using, John's performance is really suffering and he gets fired at the end of the week. But John still has some hope and manages to stay off the BTLs.
11 <sup>th</sup> week, days 71-77.	The moment of truth. John makes it to the end of this week and can make his Addiction Test (and pay Karma if successful) to Get Clean. Normally he'd roll 6 dice, but because he failed his last Withdrawal Test he has a -2 penalty. Rolling 4 dice, John gets only 1 hit and rolls a glitch! The GM decides to add two weeks to the next time John can attempt to get clean (8 weeks now, instead of 6). John still has to make the 13 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> weeks' Withdrawal Tests (and not use) before he can try to get clean again at the end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> week.

### ADDICTION EXAMPLE: LADY DRAKE

CALENDAR	
1 <sup>st</sup> First Use, day 0.	Lady Drake is a runner who's made use of Cram to give her an edge on the streets (Addiction Rating 4, Addiction Threshold 3). She is Severely addicted already (psychological). Her Body and Logic are 4 and her Willpower is 5. Lady Drake has resisted long enough but has failed her Withdrawal test at the end of her Addiction Cycle. She has to take 2 doses of Cram to satisfy her Craving, which is an Overdose, and so she takes 8S damage (resisted with Body + Willpower). Her Window closes at the end of the 7 <sup>th</sup> week, and threshold will reduce to 0 by the end of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> week.
1 <sup>st</sup> week, days 1-7.	Lady Drake wants to get clean so she makes a Withdrawal Test (9 dice) at the end of the week (Severe addiction has a weekly Addiction Cycle) but only gets one hit. With no jobs in the foreseeable future she decides to suffer the effects of Withdrawal (-4 to all Mental-related tests) until the end of her next Addiction Cycle. The threshold for the Window's Addiction Test will still be 0 by the end of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> week. In addition to making it through the Window without failing the Addiction Test, she must not use Cram for 5 weeks (end of the 6 <sup>th</sup> week as well).
2 <sup>nd</sup> week, days 8-14.	It's been a rough week, but Drake made it to the end. She again makes a Withdrawal Test, gets 3 hits and now doesn't suffer from the effects of Withdrawal. The threshold for the Window's Addiction Test will still be 0 by the end of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> week.
3 <sup>rd</sup> week, days 15-21.	It's looking rough for Drake as jobs are starting to come in again. At the end of the week, she makes her Withdrawal Test and only gets 2 hits. She can't run with the -4 penalty so she satisfies her Craving, takes 8S for Overdosing, and rolls 6 hits on her Damage Resistance Test, so she only has 2 stun to sleep off before the run that night. The Window's threshold will now be 0 by the end of 6 <sup>th</sup> week. But now she has to wait 4 weeks from now (end of 7 <sup>th</sup> week) in order to Get Clean.
4 <sup>th</sup> week, days 22-28.	Lady Drake again makes her Withdrawal test at the end of the week and gets only 2 hits again. She satisfies her Craving and resists the 8S Overdose damage with only 1 hit. The Window's threshold will now be 0 by the end of 7 <sup>th</sup> week and has to wait 4 weeks from now (end of 8 <sup>th</sup> week) in order to Get Clean.

### ADDICTION EXAMPLE: LADY DRAKE (CONTINUED)

5 <sup>th</sup> week, days 29-35.	Not playing around anymore, Drake starts using Edge (3) on her Withdrawal Tests. She rolls 12 (exploding-6's) dice, and gets the 3 hits needed to resist her Cravings. The Window's threshold will still be 0 by then end of the 7 <sup>th</sup> week (when the Window closes), but she has to stay off Cram until the end of the 8 <sup>th</sup> week in order to Get Clean.
6 <sup>th</sup> week, days 36-42.	Even using Edge again, Lady Drake gets only 2 hits on her Withdrawal Test at the end of the week. She can't live with the penalty so she takes her 2 doses and Overdoses with another 8S damage. The Window's threshold will now be 2 by the end of the 7 <sup>th</sup> week, and she must wait until the end of the 10 <sup>th</sup> week to Get Clean, as long as she can stay off Cram until then.
7 <sup>th</sup> week, days 43-49.	Here's where things get bad for Lady Drake. At the end of the week she has to make her weekly Withdrawal Test. Using Edge, she gets 9 hits so she's able to resist the Craving (if she had failed she'd either avoid getting her Fix and taking the -4 penalty to the Window's Addiction Test, or gotten her fix and taken a penalty based on her Stun damage from Overdosing!). Now, with the Window closing on her First Use, she makes an Addiction Test at the base threshold (3). She uses Edge again, and gets 5 hits. The level of her addiction doesn't worsen. And as long as she can stay off the stuff for 3 more weeks she can Get Clean.
8 <sup>th</sup> week, days 50-56.	At the end of the week, Lady Drake makes her Withdrawal Test, with Edge, and gets 9 hits. Almost there!
9 <sup>th</sup> week, days 57-63.	Again, Lady Drake makes her Edged Withdrawal Test and gets 5 hits. One more week!
10 <sup>th</sup> week, days 64-70.	At the end of the week, Lady Drake makes her Edge Withdrawal test and gets 8 hits. So she doesn't have to take a penalty or satisfy her Craving. Now she makes her Addiction Test for the 4-weeks after last use test to Get Clean and gets 4 hits! She spends 40 Karma to completely buy off the Addiction Negative Quality. Had she failed the test, or not had the 40 Karma to spend, she'd have to wait another 4 weeks (Cram's Addiction Rating) before she could try to buy it off again (assuming she managed to stay off the stuff until then).

### ADDICTION EXAMPLE: FIZZLE

	Fizzle has turned to nitro to give him both a sense of empowerment as well as a leg-up over the opposition (Addiction Rating 9, Addiction Threshold 3), but he's only Mildly Addicted. It's both a psychological and physiological addiction, and his Body is 8, Logic is 3, and his Willpower and Edge are both 4.
CALENDAR	
1 <sup>st</sup> First Use, day 0.	Today is the end of Fizzle's monthly (4-week for the GM's campaign) Addiction Cycle. Because nitro is both psycho- and physio-logically addictive, Fizzle has to make two tests, Mental at 7 dice (11 with Edge), and Physical at 12 dice (16 with edge). Fizzle always uses Edge dice for his Withdrawal tests...unless a run has left him lacking. He gets 5 and 6 hits for the Mental and Physical tests, respectively so he doesn't have to satisfy a Craving. But that night he uses nitro while on a run which creates a 2-week Window (end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> week) where the threshold will be 1.
1 <sup>st</sup> week, days 1-7.	Another week, another run, another hit of nitro on day 6. This mean's the Window's threshold will be 2, and if Fizzle wanted to Get Clean he'd have to wait 9 weeks from day 6 to Get Clean.
2 <sup>nd</sup> week, days 8-14.	Fizzle makes it through the week not using nitro. So at the end of the week he has to make his Addiction Tests for the Window closing. The threshold is 2 for both tests, and he gets 5 hits on the Physical, but only 1 hit on the Mental which means, Fizzle is now Moderately addicted. So the GM has him roll to resist Cravings, and Fizzle (using the last of his Edge on these two tests), gets 3 hits on both tests. Fizzle is now not in a Window for nitro.
3 <sup>rd</sup> week, days 15-21.	On day 20, Fizzle uses nitro on a run. This opens a new Window that closes on day 34, with a threshold of 1 if he doesn't use until then.
4 <sup>th</sup> week, days 22-28.	The end of this week marks the end of Fizzle's Moderate Addiction Cycle. He again fails his Mental test and so he uses nitro again. Since a full week will not have passed until the closing of his Window on day 34, the Window's threshold is now at 3.
5 <sup>th</sup> week, days 29-35.	On day 34, Fizzle's Window closes. The threshold is 3. Even with Edge, the poor runner fails both his Mental and Physical Addiction Tests (getting 1 and 2 hits, respectively). Fizzle is now Severely addicted to nitro. The GM decides to wait until day 35 (end of this week) to begin the new, weekly, cycle of addiction.  At the end of the week, Fizzle rolls his Withdrawal Tests for the end of the Addiction Cycle, and gets 4 hits on both tests. Lucky Fizzle.
6 <sup>th</sup> week, days 36-42.	Fizzle made it through the week without using, so he's not in a Window. But he has to make his Withdrawal Tests at the end of the week again for being Severely addicted. He gets 5 hits on his Mental test, but no hits on his Physical test. So Fizzle has to take 2 doses of nitro to satisfy his Craving. This deals the poor guy 18S damage. He rolls Body + Willpower (+ Edge since he still has 2 left), and gets only 4 hits. So he takes 10S, falls unconscious, and 2P from the overflow of Stun damage. In addition, a new Window has opened up, which will close at the end of week 8, with a threshold of 1.
7 <sup>th</sup> week, days 43-49.	Another week without additional use of nitro, and Fizzle is again making his weekly Withdrawal Tests. He gets 5 and 7 hits and doesn't have to satisfy his cravings. The Window will still close with a threshold of 1 at the end of next week unless he uses again.

## ADDICTION EXAMPLE: FIZZLE (CONTINUED)

- 8<sup>th</sup> week, days 50-56. Fizzle almost made it, but an easy run turned south on day 54 and he used again. So first is end of the week Withdrawal Tests, which he gets 2 and 9 hits. Since he failed one, he has to use (and Overdose) or take the -4 penalty to Mental tests (he made the Physical test). He chooses to take the -4 to Mental tests (instead of Overdosing and taking a penalty to all rolls due to damage modifiers). Now he rolls the closing Window's Addiction Tests, with the last two Edge, for 7 dice on the Mental test and 16 dice on the Physical test. He gets 2 and 4 hits respectively. Failing one, he now becomes a Burnout and has a daily Addiction Cycle. Also, Fizzle has a run tomorrow and can't deal with the -4 so to celebrate his Burnout status he takes the 2 doses required to alleviate the -4 penalty, Overdoses, takes 10 Stun and 1 Physical damage, and opens a new Window that closes at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> week.
- 9<sup>th</sup> week, days 57-63.
- Day 57: After the run, Fizzle makes his Withdrawal Tests (but has no more Edge); 2 and 4 hits (Mental and Physical, respectively). He can afford to take the -6 penalty with the hope that tomorrow night it gets better.
- Day 58: Withdrawal Tests, 1 die for Mental due to the -6 penalty and 12 dice for the physical test: 0 and 4 hits. Miserable, but living with the -6 Mental penalty.
- Day 59: A run has come up for tomorrow so Fizzle is hoping to get through the night: Using Edge only for the Mental test, he gets 2 hits, Mental, and 1 hit, Physical, so instead of taking a -6 penalty on both Mental and Physical tests he satisfies his Craving...3 doses! He Overdoses that night, 27S damage, uses Edge for the Damage Resistance test but only gets 4 hits! He takes 10S, with 13S overflowing into 6 Physical damage.
- Day 60: Because of the run (which he just barely survived), Fizzle wasn't able to heal the Physical damage. That night he's making his Withdrawal Tests at -2 due to the wound modifiers but at least he has 2 Edge to use. He gets 3 and 4 hits, so no modifiers and he gets to try to heal for tomorrow's test.
- Day 61: Fizzle heals 2 boxes of Physical so he's only at a -1 wound penalty to his Withdrawal Tests. He's only got 1 Edge so he uses that on his Mental test. He rolls 4 hits for his Mental test, but only 2 hits on the Physical. He can't take the -6 penalty to his Physical actions, so again he satisfies his Craving and takes 27S, He only gets 4 hits, so that's 10S with 6 more boxes of Physical damage on top of his existing 4. With only 2 boxes left in his Physical condition track, Fizzle's looking bad.
- Day 62: Resting all day, Fizzle regains 3 boxes of Physical, 7 damage. That night he makes his Withdrawal Tests, with a -2 wound penalty and one Edge for the Mental test, and gets 5 and 2 hits. What's a runner to do? He decides to take the -6 penalty to his Physical tests, and rest another day.
- Day 63: Fizzle regains 4 boxes of Physical damage through rest. And now has a run early next morning and makes his Withdrawal tests that night. He uses his one regained Edge for the Mental test again, has a -1 wound penalty, and gets 1 and 2 hits. With a run, and a total -7 penalty to his actions looming before him, Fizzle satisfies the Craving, takes 27S for Overdosing, gets 6 hits on the Damage Resistance test for 10 Stun and 5 Physical, which raises him to 8 total Physical boxes of damage. In the hours before the run he's able to rest off the Stun damage, and the team's healer brings him down to 6 Physical
- 10<sup>th</sup> week, days 64-70.
- Day 64: Unable to rest for the full day because of the run (which the team let him know would be the last with them) and the additional nitro he used on the run this morning, Fizzle makes his Withdrawal Tests, with no Edge left and a -2 wound penalty, for 4 and 2 hits. He lives with the -6 penalty. The Window Threshold at the end of this week is now at 3.
- Day 65-68: Fizzle intentionally succumbs to Withdrawal in order to heal his physical wounds and regain Edge.
- Day 69: Fizzle wants to have no Withdrawal penalties for tomorrow's tests. He is only going to use Edge on his Mental test. He's at a -6 penalty for succumbing to Withdrawal yesterday, so he's rolling 5 dice Mental (with Edge), and 6 dice Physical (no Edge), and gets 1 and 2 hits. Looks like tomorrow will be at a -6 anyway.
- Day 70: With all 4 Edge, no wound penalties, but -6 for being in Withdrawal, Fizzle makes his next Withdrawal Tests. He uses Edge on both and gets 4 and 4 hits! So he's not at a -6 for his Addiction Tests at the closing of the Window. For those tests he rolls again, using the last of his Edge on both tests, and gets 7 hits on the Mental test but only 2 hits on the Physical test. Since he's already a Burnout, and he failed on the Physical Test, Fizzle's Body is reduced by 1 to 7.

# SUBSTANCES

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Below are new (or at least expanded upon) substances for use in your game.

## CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

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### ALCOHOL

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**Vector:** Ingestion

**Speed:** Body + 1D6 minutes

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Addiction Type:** Psychological

**Effect:** One dose; +1 Charisma, +1 Social limit. With a number of doses equal to or greater than Body; -1 Agility, -2 Reaction, -2 Willpower, -2 Logic, -2 Intuition, -2 Charisma. Once the duration is over, and regardless of the number of doses taken, the user is subjected to Stun damage equal to twice the number of doses taken resisted with Body + Willpower. Characters can put off having to deal with the Stun damage by continuing to drink (though it will increase the final amount of Stun damage once the effects wear off).

Whether its synthetic or real, alcohol has been used for thousands of years to help people relax and become more sociable. The Sixth World is no different and the dark side of alcohol addiction continues to ruin lives. One dose is a typical drink, a 5% alcohol 12 oz beer, a 12% alcohol 5 oz glass of wine, or a 40% alcohol 1.5 oz shot of liquor.

Many GMs will hand wave alcohol use since it is so common, which is fine. But in doing so, using characters should not gain the benefits of taking one dose. If a character wants the benefits of a drug then they risk addiction.

### CAFFEINE (SOYCAF, COFFEE, STRONG TEA)

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**Vector:** Ingestion

**Speed:** 1 minute

**Duration:** 10 x 1D6 minutes

**Addiction Type:** Psychological

**Effect:** +1 Social limit, +1 Die to Fatigue Resistance Tests due to Sleep Deprivation (see SR5, pg 172).

In everything from a cup of morning Joe and tea to shots of espresso, most over the counter carbonated drinks, and over-the-counter pills; caffeine is the drug that allows the Sixth World to function. One dose is the equivalent to an 8 oz cup of regular brewed coffee. Caffeine's addictive qualities, while palpable, are relatively mild as far as substances go. Characters can only have the Mild Addiction Negative Quality to caffeine products.

In addition to the substance's addictive qualities, a hot cup of black soycaf (or other extremely hot drink) can cause 4P damage (treat as Thrown Weapon skill, Short Range 0, Medium 1, Long 2, Extreme 3).

Many GMs will hand wave caffeine use since it is so common, which is fine. But in doing so, using characters should not gain the benefits of taking one dose. If a character wants the benefits of a drug then they risk addiction.

### NICOTINE

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**Vector:** Inhalation

**Speed:** 1 Combat Turns

**Duration:** 10 x 1D6 minutes

**Addiction Type:** Psychological

**Effect:** +1 Mental limit

Legal but highly addictive, nicotine has been a vice of the world for centuries. Despite its addictive nature, characters may never have more than a Moderate Addiction to the drug. Smoking a nicstick or using a standard e-cig (which are modeled to behave like a cigarette; glowing ends to simulate the burn and scented water-vapor "smoke") provides a +1 Dice Pool modifier to opponents Perception tests to notice the smoker. If a character overdoses on nicotine, they must resist the damage as normal but instead of taking Stun damage they simply become disorientated and risk nausea (see toxin effects, SR5 pg 408-409).

Many GMs will hand wave nicotine use since it is so common, which is fine. But in doing so, using characters should not gain the benefits of taking one dose. If a character wants the benefits of a drug then they risk addiction.

### TEMPO (FLIPSIDE)

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**Vector:** Ingestion, Injection, or Inhalation

**Speed:** (Body + 7) minutes (ingestion), (Body + 2) minutes (injection or inhalation)

**Duration:** (10 - Body) hours, minimum 1 hour

**Addiction Type:** Both

**Effect:** +1 Body, +1 Perception, High Pain Tolerance 2, -1 Willpower, Astral Sight (see below), Resonance Inhibitor (see below).

The drug that nearly brought 2071 to its knees, Tempo's background and various additional properties can be found in Ghost Cartels (pg 58 and 133). The immediately noticeable effects are euphoria, heightened sense of wellbeing, mild hallucinations, and numbness.

**Astral Sight:** Tempo gives users (at least those that do not have the Resonance attribute) a mild and hazy ability to astral perceive. It is not strong enough to gain true astral perception but instead allows the user to sense the emotional nature of auras and "see" strong astral events within range (GM discretion as to what counts as "strong astral events" but it is suggested that Tempo users would perceive "ripples" of moving spirits of Force 4 and higher). Astral Sight bestows the following additional effects: +2 to Influence skill group skills, +2 to Social limit.

Resonance Inhibitor: For users with a Resonance attribute, they do not gain Astral Sight, or its benefits, when using Tempo. However, while they do gain +1 to Social limit, their Resonance is actually reduced by the number of doses they have used in a given Window (minimum of 0). Their Resonance returns to normal when the duration of use ends. So, for example, if a Technomancer has used Tempo three times within a Window (2 weeks) and takes a fourth dose, their Resonance will be reduced by 4 for the next (10 – Body) hours.

## **INSUBSTANTIAL SUBSTANCES**

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Some “substances” are intangible; they are the product of childhood events coupled with Pavlovian conditioning that floods the brain (naturally) with extreme amounts of (natural) chemicals. Or something like that. Essentially there are some substances that are better described as activities and if an addicted character doesn’t engage in these activities regularly then they begin to suffer withdrawal.

Insubstantial substances never require a character to make an Addiction Test unless they already have the Addiction Negative Quality for it or wish their character to take it as an Addiction Negative Quality.

Any time an addicted character is confronted with the opportunity to engage in the insubstantial substance that they are addicted to they should make an Addiction Test in order to resist. If the test fails they suffer the effects of Withdrawal until they are sufficiently away from the temptation (minimum 1 hour).

Insubstantial substances do not have a vector, speed, or duration. Their addiction type is almost always psychological and they almost never have an effect, though the GM is encouraged to give an addicted character a +1 to their Social limit for a few hours to a day after they have successfully engaged in “using” (and if the results of using were positive; i.e. a gambler having won money).

The Addiction Rating and Addiction Threshold of insubstantial substances are up to the GM but should be on-par with Alcohol.

Overdosing on insubstantial substances (such as satisfying Cravings at the severe or burnout addiction levels), should reflect overstimulation, excessive habits, and other activities that lead to dehydration, heavy exertion, lack of eating, etc., as they lose focus on basic needs.

## **AUGMENTATION ADDICTION**

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Characters that are addicted to augmentation experience compulsive disorder levels of interest in cyberware and bioware. They also regularly go in for new augmentations and, when money is tight, they go in for basic tweaks, cleanings, and diagnostics checks on what they already have implanted.

At the mild and moderate levels of augmentation addiction, the character often comes across as the

“perfect patient/customer” for the doctors that they see. They are always on time for their routine check-ups and often engage their doctors to get all the information they can on how to best care for their augmentations. But missing a check-up can lead the character to become distracted. At the severe level, characters have to find street doctors with loose ethical and moral codes who will placate the character’s obsessive desires and agree to install more augmentations, or install augmentations faster/cheaper/etc., than is medically safe. At the burnout level, the addict is simply undergoing too many procedures for their body to adequately recover.

The cost for augmentation addiction should be at least ¥100 per “dose” in the form of cyberspecialist visits, medicine refills, etc. Any new augmentation implanted can also count as a dose for resisting Withdrawal (as well as opening Addiction Test Windows). At higher levels of the addiction, the GM may increase the costs per dose to satisfy Cravings by up to 10% of the total augmentations that the currently character has implanted.

## **DIETARY ADDICTION**

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Dietary addiction means the character is addicted to a specific diet regimen and not in a good way. Anorexia and bulimia are two dark examples but it can also include vegetable or protein avoidance, meals replaced with homeopathic “super” vitamins, and other eating disorders.

Mild and moderate dietary addiction often goes unnoticed, as the addict uses common excuses to avoid social discovery while feigning colds or other mild illnesses to mask the toll on their health that nutrient deficiency is taking. At the severe level, it is physically apparent that the addict is malnourished. Dietary addiction at the burnout stage is where the body begins consuming itself in search of the nutrients it so desperately needs.

This addiction has no nuyen cost associated with it unless the player specifies expensive/rare food items.

## **GAMBLING ADDICTION**

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Gambling addiction, for game purposes, means any kind of gambling; from horses to sports to games of chance. Just about any suggestion of “taking a bet” will be a trigger for a gambler which they will either joyfully take or, possibly, have to make an Addiction Test to walk away from.

The low levels of gambling addiction, mild and moderate, are difficult to notice for most people in the gambler’s life. “They like [instert-game/sport-here], so let them spend their hard-earned nuyen on it,” is what friends and family say as they fail to notice or ignore the lengths the gambler goes to in order to make a bet. At the severe level, most close friends, and many acquaintances, have been affected by the gambler’s actions; often in the form giving them money to cover bills, rent, food, and the like. Gambling addiction at the burnout stage is socially accrued, meaning losses to

attributes occur due to not having enough money to eat or pay bills, loansharks breaking legs, and the like. While the GM is free to roll play this out, it is often better to keep it behind the scenes as the gambler becomes weak, sniveling, and pathetic when confronted with their addiction by bookies looking to collect.

Gambling addiction costs the addicted character a base 100¥ per hour engaged in gambling. If there are enough in-game gambling opportunities for the character then losses go towards this base cost. Any time the addict attempts to walk away with their winnings they must succeed on an Addiction Test to do so. Failure means they must continue to bet as their luck is “obviously” with them or the next bet will be the “big score.”

## SEX ADDICTION

Despite the back and forth in academia about whether sex addiction is real or not, for characters with sex as their Addiction Negative Quality it acts just like a real addiction. It's a can of worms really and depends on each individual campaign and the players for inclusion in their game. The sex-positive mantra of “safe, sane, and consensual” becomes forgotten by the sex addict either in one or several of its parts.

At the mild and moderate levels, sex addicts are either doing well at keeping it behind closed doors or they have a “they like to party” persona. At the severe level, the addict's behavior and actions become apparently harmful both to the character and their partners. Sex addiction at the burnout stage can be due to some undiagnosed STI that is ravaging the addict's body, unsafe practices in play, etc.

For characters with a Charisma of 3 or higher there is generally no inherent cost to this addiction as they scroll through hook-up sites and flirt at bars, but the number of hours required to satisfy their addiction should be doubled. For characters with a Charisma lower than 3, a base 100¥ per hour is suggested to represent professional “help” in satisfying their addiction.

## SELF-HARM/RISK-PRONE BEHAVIOR

In one way or another, the insubstantial substances above are a form of risky and/or self-harming behavior. The GM can allow for players to take an umbrella Addiction Negative Quality that covers several or all of the insubstantial substances as well as increasing the risk that the character will use harmful drugs in order to meet the need to satisfy the desire for self-harm or risky behavior. This follows all the standard rules for the Addiction Negative Quality but at the end of each Addiction Cycle, when determining the Craving the player rolls randomly to determine what kind of behavior the character will engage in for that Craving. The GM and player should come up with tailored random tables for the character along the lines of 1-2: Gambling, 3-4: Sex, 5: Alcohol, 6: Novacoke. This introduces the possibility of the character becoming

addicted to a second, or more, substance on top of the umbrella Self-harm/Risk-prone behavior addiction.

The Karma costs for Self-harm/Risk-prone Behavior Addictions should be increased by 50% (round down) of the Negative Quality's normal cost if the character's random table includes drugs (including alcohol) and/or BTLs.

## MAGICAL SUBSTANCES

### FOCI

Foci only endanger users if the Force of the total active (not bound) foci exceeds their Magic Attribute (called excessive use). This means that the Addiction Rating (and all variables dependant on Addiction Rating, like the Window) is variable. Once a Window is set, excessive use of foci within the Window do not affect the Window's set length.

The Addiction Threshold of excessive foci use is 2, regardless of the total Force of active foci used.

### EXAMPLE

#### FOCI ADDICTION

Nikki the Mouse has Logic, Willpower, and Magic Ratings all at 5. At the start of a run she activates her Force 4 spell focus (health) to sustain her Improved Reflexes spell and doesn't have to worry about addiction. Later, she activates a Force 4 spell focus (illusion) to sustain Improved Invisibility. Now, with the total Force of her active foci being 8, she has to worry about addiction. She faces an Addiction Rating of 8 and a Window of 3 weeks. But then things start to go south for her and her team. She decides to activate her Force 3 centering focus to stay alive. The run ends and she deactivates her foci. But now she's facing an Addiction Rating of 11 and a Window of 1 day. So the next evening she is forced to make a Logic + Willpower (2) Test in order to avoid becoming addicted to her foci. But with her high Logic and Willpower, she is able to avoid it and is considered Clean.

A week later, Nikki is on another run. This one goes more smoothly, but she still activated her two spell foci. So now she's facing an Addiction Rating of 8 and a Window of 3 weeks. So in 3 weeks she'll have to make another Addiction Test unless she avoids using excessive foci until then (as the Threshold will drop to 0 by then).

Unfortunately for Nikki, she finds herself in trouble two weeks after the last run and ends up activating all three foci again. This counts as another use so the threshold is reset but the Addiction Rating and the Window do not change (even though she had a total Force of 11 for all the active foci this time). The last week passes without much going down so she ends up making a Logic + Willpower (1) Test to avoid addiction.

Foci addiction isn't pretty. At first (Mild Addiction), Awakened users are rarely aware of the crutch that they have started to lean on. They tend to forget to turn off

their foci or go out of their way to find reasons to activate them and keep them on. "It's not an issue," or "how absent minded of me," they will often remark, somewhat defensively, as they turn them off and convince themselves they aren't thinking of a good reason to turn them back on.

At Moderate severity, the foci addict will do just about anything to have at least one focus on at all times. They may see the danger of keeping foci active in situations where that is true, but even then; a little danger is worth the constant hum of astral energies flowing through them. Collecting and bonding foci often becomes an impassioned hobby at this point.

Severe addiction is just that. Currently bonded foci are left on. If they aren't currently maxed out on bonded foci then they are hungry to do so. If they are maxed out, a severely addicted Awakened individual may start bonding and unbonding the foci they have, ever searching for that 'perfect' combination to give them that feeling they had when they first excessively activated their foci. At this point they start to suffer physically as well. Nothing major, just dark circles under their eyes and a gaunt look as all their time becomes...focused...around their mana-channeling items and increased irritability and mood swings as food and sleep are ignored.

The foci burnout is terrible to behold. Armed with real (and sometimes fake) foci, their attire begins to take on a ramshackled and disheveled look. Their bodies begin to wither away and yet, with all the active foci, they radiate a palpable, even menacing, power. Urban legends abound about burnt-out mages being the source for legendary liches and other magically potent skeletal-like figures where upon their swiftly-approaching deaths wraiths are born.

Additionally, those addicted to foci are more prone to attracting the attention of magical predators. Whether metahuman or spirit, awakened conmen and manipulator spirits find focus junkies prone to seduction via offering paths to power at a faster pace than hard work, study, and perseverance.

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## SIM SUBSTANCES

Sim-related substances (i.e. BTLs) are discussed in the Shadowrun *Sim Dreams and Nightmares* ebook. But keep in mind that both Hot- and Cold-Sim are addictive. Like with coffee, alcohol, and most of the insubstantial addictions listed above, the GM should feel free to handwave the use of sim, especially Cold-Sim, in order to reduce bookkeeping. Since most deckers and technomancers will have high enough Logic and Willpower attributes the GM can also allow them to buy the hits needed (just 1) unless a Matrix run was particularly long or eventful (even increasing the threshold for engaging with particularly nasty custom psychoactive IC).

Use of any kind of BTL within a BTL Window should reset the Addiction Threshold to the level of new BTL used but not the Window itself. For example, if a runner slots a Trip Chip (3 week Window, threshold 3) and in the final week of the Window uses a Moodchip, the threshold is reset to 2 (that of the Moodchip) and not to the original Tripchip's threshold of 3.

Additionally, GMs can simplify BTL addiction by making all BTLs have the same Addiction Rating and Threshold, suggested 7 and 2, respectfully.

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## ESSENCE DRAIN

Addiction to essence drain is particularly nasty. Not only is the character suffering from the Addiction Negative Quality, but also damage to a completely separate attribute; one that affects the performance of almost every character archetype.

Using essence drain addiction with players should be something the GM has thought out and consulted the player(s) in question on. Like giving characters CFD, subjecting them to essence drain will, most likely, greatly affect the character's performance and, should they become HMMVV infected, how they run the shadows.

## SUBSTANCE TABLES

The tables below extrapolates from the Addiction Table (SR5, pg 414) by adding the Window and the number of weeks of safe use of the substance, after the first, during a Window where the Addiction Threshold will reduce to 0 by the time the Window ends (NA indicates that just one use guarantees having to make an Addiction Test at the end of the Window, 0 indicates that only the first dose can be safely taken in order to reduce its Addiction Threshold to 0 by the end of its Window).

### SHADOWRUN 5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION CORE RULEBOOK SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE	ADDICTION TYPE	ADDICTION RATING / DRY OUT	WINDOW	ADDICTION THRESHOLD	WEEKS OF SAFE USE
<b>Drugs</b>					
Alcohol	Psychological	3	8	2	6
Bliss	Both	5	6	3	3
Cram	Physiological	4	7	3	4
Deepweed <sup>1</sup>	Physiological	5	6	2	4
Jazz	Both	8	3	3	0
Kamikaze	Physiological	9	2	3	NA
Long Haul	Psychological	2	9	1	8
Nitro	Both	9	2	3	NA
Novacoke	Both	7	4	2	2
Psyche	Psychological	6	5	2	3
Soycaf	Psychological	1	10	2	8
Zen	Psychological	3	8	1	7
<b>Simsense</b>					
BTL, Dreamchip	Psychological	6	5	1	4
BTL, Moodchip	Psychological	6	5	2	3
BTL, Personafix	Psychological	7	4	2	2
BTL, Tripchip	Psychological	8	3	3	0
Hot-Sim Simsense	Psychological	3	8	1	7
Legal-Strength Simsense	Psychological	2	9	1	8
Skillwires	Psychological	5	6	2	4
<b>Magical</b>					
Focus Addiction	Psychological	Force <sup>2</sup>	11 – Force <sup>2</sup>	2	Varies
Essence Drain	Psychological	Magic <sup>3</sup>	11 – Magic <sup>3</sup>	2	Varies

<sup>1</sup> Stats were not supplied in SR5, other than its Addiction Type.  
<sup>2</sup> The total Force of all active foci. See Foci, above.  
<sup>3</sup> The critter's Magic rating at the time of drain.

### ADDICTION BOOK NEW SUBSTANCES

SUBSTANCE	ADDICTION TYPE	ADDICTION RATING / DRY OUT	WINDOW	ADDICTION THRESHOLD	WEEKS OF SAFE USE
<b>Drugs</b>					
Caffeine	Psychological	2	9	2	7
Nicotine	Psychological	6	5	2	3
Tempo	Both	9	2	4	NA
<b>Insubstantial<sup>1</sup></b>					
Dietary	Psychological	3	8	2	6
Gambling	Psychological	3	8	2	6
Sex	Psychological	3	8	2	6

<sup>1</sup> No risk of becoming addicted without player's choice. Base ratings should be equal to alcohol at a minimum unless GM and Player agree to increase them otherwise.

# QUICK & DIRTY ADDICTION RULES

The Shadowrun 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Addiction rules are largely a cut-and-paste reprint of 4<sup>th</sup> Edition's *Sim Dreams and Nightmares* ebook's rules but streamlined and tweaked a bit. Additionally the rules require a bit of tracking for players and GMs that for many just isn't worth it (leading to players taking the Addiction Negative Quality and ignoring it which then places all the responsibility on the GM to keep track for the player or forces the player to make different character choices; neither of which is fun).

Use the following rules in place of the SR5 Addition rules (from the Negative Qualities to getting addicted, withdrawal, and getting clean).

## QUICK FIX: ADDICTION NEGATIVE QUALITY

The costs for the Addiction Negative Quality stay the same as does the dose/activity-time per interval for each level of Addiction.

Merge the cost of their chosen substance into the character's Lifestyle cost. So a Severe Addiction (2 does per week, or 8 per month) to cram adds 80¥ to the character's Lifestyle cost. Assume they are using their chosen substance as needed.

Any time the character is in, and aware of, a stressful situation (gunfight, car chase, intense negotiation, or any failed Composure Test) they have to roll an Addiction Test with a threshold equal to the substance's Threshold rating plus a modifier determined by their Addiction level as noted on the Addiction Quality Threshold Modifiers table below. If the character succeeds on the test they can act normally. Even if they are already under the substance's effects, if they fail they suffer a -2 (for Mild Addiction), -4 (for Moderate or Severe Addiction) or a -6 (for Burnout) penalty on all tests based on their Addiction (Mental tests or Physical tests) until they use their substance of choice. This usually is not an issue for the cram addict who takes a hit from her stash at the start of a firefight. But for the gambler, unless someone wants to wager with him on the outcome of the current firefight he's in, he's going to have a rough time of it!

ADDICTION QUALITY THRESHOLD MODIFIERS	
SEVERITY	THRESHOLD MODIFIER
Mild	-1*
Moderate	+0
Severe	+1
Burnout	+2

\* Minimum threshold of 1.

If a character is already using when they fail a stressful situation Addiction Test they can choose to either increase the severity of their Addiction by one level or Overdose (as per SR5 pg 415). If they choose Overdose and get a critical glitch on the Damage Resistance Test they also have the level of their Addiction increased by one, if they survive the Overdose.

## QUICK FIX: GETTING ADDICTED

Instead of keeping track of a window of time and the weekly reduction of the Addiction Threshold until the window closes and, if the threshold is still greater than 0, make a test to see if the character becomes addicted to a substance, use the following to determine if a character becomes addicted to a substance.

When a character uses an addictive substance, immediately make an appropriate Addiction Test for that substance. If the test is a success, the character is not addicted. If it fails, the character gains the Addiction Negative Quality at the Mild level. If the test is a glitch, they are addicted at the Moderate level. On a critical glitch the addiction is Severe.

The GM should discuss with the players which substances will require an Addiction Test and which will not as an Addiction Test every time someone has a drink at their local bar will inevitably lead to a party of drunks.

## QUICK FIX: GETTING CLEAN

To get clean, a user must spend a month (or 4 weeks if the campaign is kept track of on a weekly basis) of not using the substance for each level of their Addiction.

At the end of each month the character makes an Addiction Test against the substance's Addiction Threshold, modified by the Addiction Quality Threshold Modifiers (see table, above). If successful, the character can spend the post-character-creation Karma cost difference between their current Addiction level and the lower level to now have their Addiction at that lower level.

Being clean for a month, succeeding on the Addiction Test, and spending the Karma, for a Mild Addiction the character is now clean.

Characters can also use the rules for Rehab (see the Basic Rules section, above) to help to get clean.