Mixed Martial Arts

By J. Le Rossignol

Cyberpunk 2020 has a huge combination of hand to hand combats skills in the Martials Arts (MA), and Fencing, Brawling & Melee. So, while I love the game system, I feel that it faces some challenges in expressing Martial Arts with their full flavour. Firstly, choosing a MA locks you into a path and this does not reflect the current understanding of martial combat (or Mixed Martial Arts).

Secondly, if your character wants to improve their Hand to Hand (H2H) combat abilities then it requires the investment in a new MA skill and this ignores a character's previous experiences in H2H. For example; Judo, Aikido and Wrestling provide very similar bonuses and these combination is almost redundant.

> "You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash. Become like water my friend."
>
> — **Bruce Lee**

Thirdly, as the MA practitioner becomes more proficient, the Master (Sensei or Sifu) will expand their understanding of combat to include sparring and then weapon forms. For example; higher levels of Karate incorporate Katana, and Aikido adds staff.

Finally, there are only so many ways of breaking your opponent and biomechanics can point to the most efficient & effective techniques. The most experienced MMA fighters draw from many differing Mas to blend the techniques together into their personal style. Bruce lee summed it up beautifully with his quote, "Become like water my friend."

From a game mechanic perspective, most of the time the Brawling & Melee skills get overlooked in favour of the skills that have a damage advantage. And

My goal here is to retain the feel of the CP2020 martial arts while allowing characters to grow and evolve their art. So, this idea will replace the skills of Martial Arts, Brawling, Melee, and Fencing with a MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) skill.

Anyone who has trained in this area will realise that aspects of this complex skill set develop at different rates. In some MA, weapons are introduced once the foundations are laid. And most MA action movie seems to feature a training montage, where the hero learns a new technique to help them defeat the villain of the piece.

What about Traditional vs Mixed Martial Arts? While Traditional Forms have an established history and you could learn from a master, MMA blend forms and will require multiple masters to teach you different techniques. This leads to many role-playing opportunities where the player needs something from an NPC. According to Musashi Miyamoto, "The Way is in training".

Hand to Hand Combat

Brawling (ie Basic Martial Arts) covers the core techniques of fighting, things like judging distance and timing. Beyond that are the key attacks or advanced techniques.

The advanced techniques are the magic sauce of MA, expanding on the basic idea and adding additional lethality and they can be broken into 4 ideas: joint locking to restrain or break limbs, deflecting an attack to avoid injury, disruptions to knock down, and a wide variety of Strikes. (Strikes, Locks, Deflects, & Disruptions.)

The first advantage is that anyone skilled with the technique gains a modifier bonus to that action. This is equal to +1 for every 2 levels of skill (ie +1 to +5 at skill 10). They also gain the additional benefits, listed below.

Skill	Key Bonus
0 - 1	+0
2 - 3	+1
4 - 5	+2
6 - 7	+3
8 - 9	+4
10	+5

Strikes are the techniques designed to enhance the damage delivered with that weapon These six categories include:

- Hand Strikes (include hand/fist, elbow, head-butts, and upper-body cyber-weapons),
- Foot Strikes (include strikes with feet, knees, hip, and lower-body cyber-weapons),
- Blunt Weapons (ie tonfa, clubs etc),
- Edged Weapons (ie knives, sai, swords, etc),
- 2H weapons (ie quarterstaff, bo staff, 2h sword, etc),
- Polearms (ie spear, halberds, and other long battlefield weapons, etc).

On a successful attack using the appropriate technique, the character adds their skill level to the damage dealt.

Disruptions cover grappling, pushing & ramming people, knocking them over and sweeping their feet out from under them. The effect of a successful attack is to move the opponent, either in space or to the ground making them prone. They suffer a -2 to their next action and you gain a +2 against them.

> A Grapple is just a regular attack to get control of any part of the body (i.e. roll location), and a prerequisite for holds, locks, chokes, & throws. A grapple gives a +2 to your next action against that opponent.

> A Push will move the target 1 meter and give them -2 to their next action.

> A Ram combines with a move action with a push, getting -3 for Multiple Actions. The target is moved half the distance travelled and suffers a -2 for their next action.

> A Sweep will knock a target prone.

> A Throw requires a grappled opponent: the target will be knocked to the ground, doing 1D6 damage, plus a stun roll at -2.

> A Disarm will knock the weapon from the opponent's hand. If grappled first you can get the weapon.

Locks cover the ideas of holds, locks, chokes, and breaks. All these techniques aim to disable your opponent in some way but require two or more limbs to do so.

> A hold immobilises the body, while a lock immobilises a limb (including the head). In both cases the character is immobilised unless they can break free.

> A choke is applied to the head and causes 1d6 damage per turn.

> The only difference between a lock and a break is the amount of force applied. So once grappled, an attack needs to exceed what is needed to break a limb (i.e. 8 points). It does not trigger a Mortal save, just a Stun save at -2, unless the character wants to rip the limb off.

Deflects cover blocking and deflecting attacks. The effect is to increase the difficulty of hitting your opponents (ie Parry). However, if the character also knows the attacking technique then they can reduce the damage by half their skill level to a minimum of 1. (ie -Damage).

Martials Arts and Multiple Actions

A character can combine multiple actions in a single round. If the action is against a single target, then it can be reduced to a single roll to speed up game play. Some combinations include: Grapple + Hold, Grapple + Throw, Ram (ie Move & Push), Grapple + Disarm, Grapple + Hold + Break (3 actions at -6), etc…

Martial Arts, the skill

Martial Arts (MA) is the skill of trying to injure other people. At +2, you've taken a self-defence course. At +4, you are a Black belt in a style of Martials Arts. At +7, you're a known MMA fighter. At +9, you're a world-renowned artist of death.

Characters start with a known Martial Art, like from the list below. Once they have gained experience they can develop their Mixed Martial Arts or Fighting styles. The skill complexity is equal to ½ + ½ for each additional technique (described above).

Developing your own Fighting Style

Once you have found a teacher with at least +4 in the Key Skill and teaching, a character can start expanding their style with additional techniques. The IP Multiplier is automatically increased to incorporate the techniques, however, the character can't access the bonuses until the training cost is paid. This training cost is 10 IP multiplied by the increase in the multiple.

If you cannot find a teacher, but still wish to train then it will cost double.

Examples of going your own way

Anodyne is a trained professional with Aikido at 5. However, after a recent job she feels the need to add some boxing techniques (ie Hand strikes) to her repertoire. So, she starts training al the local Boxing Gym. The multiplier for her MMA increases to 3.5 but cannot use the bonuses for Hand strikes until she spends the 5 IP.

Boris is a streetfighter (skill = 4) and takes up HEMA (Historical European Martial Arts). His new style increases the skill multiplier from 0.5 to 3.5 and he must pay 30 IP to add weapons to his MMA.

Martial Art Style	Hand Strikes	Foot Strikes	Blunt Weapons	Edged Weapons	2H weapons	Polearms	Locks	Deflects	Disruptions
Aikido (3)	-	-	Y	Y	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Animal Kung Fu (2.5)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y
Boxing (1.5)	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Brawling (0.5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capeolra (2.5)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y
Chol Ll Fut (2.5)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y
Judo (2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Karate (2)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Melee, 1-Handed (1.5)	-	-	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Melee, All (3)	-	-	Y	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	-
Melee, HEMA (3)	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	Y
Melee, Kendo (1.5)	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	Y	-
Melee, Olympic Fencing (1.5)	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	Y	-
Melee, Sword & Shield (2)	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	Y	Y
Savate (2)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-
Streetfighting (1)	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TaeKwonDo (2.5)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y
Thai Boxing (3)	Y	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y
Total (5)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wrestling (2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y

Sample Martial Arts

Cyberpunk 2020 lists several Martial Arts popular in the '80s & '90s, and many other supplements provide additional martial arts. Brawling is listed but provides no advantages.

How to record this?

Simply add a note to the character sheet that records which advanced techniques the character has learned. See the example to the right.

Converting

The conversion from CP2020 Martial Art rules is just a straight swap as they are basically the same rules. However, the skills will need some mashing together.

Option 1.

1. For a single skill, just pick the appropriate from the above list.
2. For multiple skills, take the highest skill and add the techniques from the other skills.

Option 2. Convert the four skills (Brawling, Melee, Fencing & MA) in to IP with the respective Multipliers, and then convert back to the MMA skill with the appropriate IP multiplier for the combination of techniques known.

Technique	+
Hand Strikes	-
Foot Strikes	-
Blunt Weapons	-
Edged Weapons	-
2H weapons	-
Polearms	-
Locks	-
Deflects	-
Disruptions	-