

Progression

Part 1 - Power

In Chimborazo, there are two main facets of progression. They aren't really separated mechanically, but I will split them into two parts in these previews for the purpose of brevity.

First up is the vertical and horizontal progression of the character in the context of the game. Usually, ideally, characters get stronger over time. They learn to do more things, and to do them better than before. This is progression of quantity, and it deals with *what* a character is and becomes.

Acquiring new skills

The first and most crucial step to any form of progression is diversification of options. Even if you improve how good you are at doing what you do, static and stale gameplay is the quickest path to player boredom. Gaining new skills over time opens up new possibilities.

Skills grow on skill trees, and in order to get them, a character must meet the prerequisites of the skill tree, which give them access to it and immediately grant them the first tier of skills on that tree, the lowest hanging fruits. Additionally, skills higher up the tree might have further requirements that the character has to meet. Prerequisites for skills (and skill trees) come in two basic and several special varieties.

The two basic prerequisites are knowledge and training. Knowledge is gained through *learning*, training is gained through *practice*, and there are various sources of both, including downtime actions.

The special requirements include, but aren't limited to:

- items
- events
- experience*

*Since this is a preview, I will allow myself to mention other games - something I don't do in the book normally. If you're thinking about experience as a numerical thing, forget it. In this game, *an experience* is shorthand for a special form of knowledge, one derived exclusively from practice, and with a very specific topic.

Upgrading skills

Aside from gaining new skills, your current skills can become better over time. There are two tiers of upgrades that a skill can have, each making it more powerful when its conditions are met. They work as status effects your character gains and apply as tags to the skill for which they fulfilled the conditions. The two upgrades are:

Established action

What it is

An established action represents something that your character has well established being capable of doing well, and consistently so. They are competent with this skill and will always accomplish it successfully under normal circumstances.

What it does

Established actions don't involve a roll of the dice (the GM can always require one) and succeed automatically if their value is high enough. If a roll of the dice is required, it comes with an instance of advantage.

How to get it

In order to upgrade a skill to an established action, you must use it successfully three times in a row with the odds stacked against you, over the course of one game session*. Once this condition has been fulfilled, the skill immediately gains the established action status.

*Note that:

- you don't have to use it as three consecutive actions of your character, however a failure resets the count.
- for the odds to be stacked against you, you must be under a negative condition that reduces the skill's value and/or be rolling with disadvantage.
- by default, progress doesn't carry over between game sessions, regardless of their duration, but if the party wants to take notes and agrees to do it, they are free to do so.

Signature ability

What it is

A signature ability represents your character's most iconic moves, their best and most practiced skills, the ones they always default to and can execute perfectly.

What it does

Signature abilities always succeed unless opposed by other signature abilities or directly countered. In that case, they have advantage and can't have disadvantage.

How to get it

In order to upgrade a skill to a signature ability first it must be already upgraded to an established action, and its skill tree must be mastered*.

*Note that:

- a "mastered" skill tree means that your character has access to every skill in it and has at least three skills in that tree as established actions already, representing true mastery in the field that the tree represents.

Upgrading stats

In this game, your character's numerical descriptors play a large role. They are used directly for basic actions, and skills scale with them. Therefore, every single point is immensely impactful in all manner of applications, and that's why stat increases are the highest form of quantitative progression.

Completed skill trees can be utilized as a single-use downtime activity to increase their governing stat by 1.

Stat caps

Each stat has a unique (and different) cap, beyond which it can't be increased normally. Certain elements of the game can increase or decrease what that cap is for your character, but never below 11*.

*For context, chargen uses a point buy system, and you can start the game with one stat at 10, but you can't start with a stat capped out.

Reaching a cap grants you a passive special skill related to that stat.

Powers

Each combination of two maxed out stats has a unique name and provides a special effect. They are referred to as "powers" and are immediately granted upon satisfying the condition. And yes, don't worry, a lower cap still counts. You won't get to increase the stat as high as other characters potentially could, but you get the cap bonus sooner.

This preview won't spoil what all of them are, but in order to provide an example, having maxed out Strength and Will gives you the properties of the Heart of Steel.

Mantles

Combinations of *three* maxed out stats are called Mantles. However, they are very rare and have special properties. Only a single individual per world can bear a specific mantle at any given time, so as long as another person is the active bearer of that mantle, anyone else that qualifies for it is only a Bearer Elect, set to succeed them.

But again, worry not, because merely being worthy of a mantle brings more power and prestige than anything else.