

THINKDM's SIMPLE TRAP SYSTEM

Traps can be fun. A great myth is that traps need to be carefully curated to be worth anything. While curated traps are wonderful, even simple traps can be great. You need flavor, interactivity, and suspense. Flavor comes from having a variety of traps with different effects.

Interactivity comes from giving the players a choice that impacts the outcome of the trap. Suspense comes from lasting consequences that make the rolls matter.

Flavor is easy to satisfy with a list of traps that target different saves and deal various damage types. This provides a spark to describe the trap how you want.

For interactivity, some DMs employ the "click" rule—a great concept that is ripe for mechanical development.

THE "CLICK" RULE

When the characters encounter a trap, the DM declares "CLICK!" Going around the table, the players have the opportunity to say how their character reacts. This decision can affect the outcome of the trap being triggered. The usual application is to confer a bonus or penalty to the saving throw.

Suspense is achieved by imposing lasting conditions that can affect the characters in the coming battles. When doing this, you need to be careful that the effect is impactful, but not crippling.

Roll	Trap	Save	Damage Type	Good Reaction	Bad Reaction	Condition (Fail by 5+)
1	Darts	DEX	Piercing	Prone	Jump	Puncture Wound -1 Constitution
2	Pit	DEX	Bludgeoning	Jump	Prone	Twisted Ankle -5 Speed
3	Snare	STR	Slashing	Jump	Prone	Restrained
4	Spikes	DEX	Piercing	-	Prone	Hamstrung -5 Speed
5	Falling Debris	STR	Bludgeoning	Brace	Prone	Concussed -1 Intelligence
6	Swinging Ram	DEX	Bludgeoning	Prone	Jump	Winded -1 Constitution
7	Poison	CON	Poison	Prone	-	Poisoned
8	Flame	DEX	Fire	Prone	Brace	Burned -1 Armor Class

In play, most reactions fall into three categories. You can **brace** for impact. You can **jump** to safety. You can go **prone** when your allies shout "hit the deck!" No matter how your player flavors their reaction, it will generally fall into one of these categories.

Reactions are balanced so that riskier choices provide a greater chance of advantage with an equal risk of disadvantage. Going prone is the riskiest option. Jumping out of the way is the median option. Bracing for impact is the safest option.

Once the players have declared their reactions, announce what the trap does. Players roll a saving throw depending on the type of trap. Good reactions allow the player to roll with advantage. Bad reactions cause the player to roll with disadvantage. If you fail your saving throw by 5 or more, you also suffer a negative condition until you take a long rest or the condition is corrected by other means, such as a *lesser restoration* spell, a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check, or simply cutting an ally out of a net.

BY THINKDM