Hawke's No Additional Rolls Critical System for d20 (All Versions)
Based on AD&D 2nd Edition, but modified to not add any additional Rolls
Beta Version 20140926a

Though I run d20 games regularly, I miss the days of Role-master and MERP with the detailed critical systems. However, they required extra rolls, and were arbitrary in hit location.
I have wanted to have hit location and critical details for d20. I have used the old Original D&D rules from the Blackmoor Supplement with percentile for hit location. And some of my players that later have become DM's adapted that as well, having their players roll a d20 with percentile simultaneously. But it still lacked details for critical hits (other than just plain multiplying of damage).
I do not care for hit points just being totally abstract and not reflecting overall health (as 5th edition really emphasizes, and takes to an extreme that I totally disagree with, allowing them to completely restore all hit points from a single long rest!), and prefer something with some detail.
For decades I have just arbitrarily had players (and myself) add details to the attacks when they hit, describing a slash across the chest, or crunching sound to the arm, etc.
I also looked at Monte Cooke's d20 3.x publication best of d20, but that too was very lacking.

During the 1980s I pretty much bought every single AD&D 1st edition product ever made, then they started the whole process over again with 2nd edition, and I stopped buying TSR products until moving to Spokane in 2004. Meanwhile I played many other RPGs; MERP, Rolemaster, Twilight 2000, Call of Cthulhu, Star Wars, Star Trek, and scores of others, and not a single TSR/Wizards product during the interim. So I never actually played much of 2nd edition (other than the first players hand book, DMG, and MM when they first came out), and missed all the other supplements.
In recent years, as I have been working on my RPG Research project, I have been picking up used copies of 2nd Edition AD&D for very little money $2 to $9 per item typically.
I recently started looking through them and stumbled across the combat screen, that included the rules from the supplement Players Options: Combat Tactics. And within was a critical hit location system. I read the relevant section of the book, and realized here was something that possibly could work with all versions of d20, but it needs some improvements from the original.
The original just sets a wider crit range, but with more requirements, and then if a critical hit, then rolling to see which location is hit (1d10) between arms, legs, abdomen, chest, and head, and then again to determine the severity of the hit (determined by earlier rolls). It kind of works, but after play testing it with a few groups, it significantly slowed down combat situations, and not only made encounters take longer, it also slowed down the action so that players became less interested, rather than more. Once again that balance between detail and speed....
So, I thought about trying to make the system work without adding ANY rolls. I have been through other variants with only one roll (hit location for example) and that is okay, but the current beta versions I am testing requires ZERO additional rolls from the standard d20 to hit, and then damage dice.

This still has some problems that I am trying to work out, but the basic version is working well both with 1st Edition AD&D and with 3rd edition and 5th edition (I haven't ever found anyone willing to play 4th edition).
How many times have you rolled that d20, added the bonuses, and had an awesome total (though not a "Nat 20"), and thought "What a waste of a great roll" because then you just roll your normal damage dice. Wouldn't it be nice if the greater the d20 hit roll, there would be a gradient of increasingly more

severe consequences to the target being hit?

Of course, this works both ways, the PCs are at greater risk as well, which for my style of play/GM emphasizing R-O-L-E-playing over R-O-L-L-playing (aka hack 'n' slash, min-maxing, munchkin play, IMNSVHO) encourages players to find non-combat solutions since the risk of combat is more deadly to all parties invovled.

The basic premise is that there is a quick math calculation used multiple times, instead of multiple rolls. Here is the basic version (still needs work):

An attacker rolls a standard d20, applies any to hit bonuses, for the total to hit roll.

If the total is less than is normally requires to hit, nothing is different.

If the total is exactly the amount needed to hit, the attacker just rolls hit points (it is 0 above the necessary to hit roll). If the attack total is 1 or more above the necessary amount, then it registers on the hit <u>location</u> chart. For those of you that do not have the 2nd Edition screen with the crits, I am including them here, but modified for my tastes (borrowing from RM/MERP and such).

The type of weapon determines which of three weapon charts are consulted; Piercing, Bludgeoning, Slashing. All three use the same hit location, but have different detailed descriptions for specific wounds based on the critical type.

~~Here is the first part (you could consider that the higher the number, the closer it gets to the most vital areas, the head). I am for now using the default from 2nd Edition, but I am thinking about making a lot of customizations to this basic premise down the road to improve the logic, but for now, using the default AD&D 2nd edition chart:~~

~~Location:~~
~~1-2 = Right leg~~
~~3-4 = left leg~~
~~5 = Abdomen (or lower back)~~
~~6-7 = Torso (chest or upper back)~~
~~8 = left arm~~
~~9 = right arm~~
~~10 = Head~~

~~So, if the attacker total to hit roll is 1-2 above the necessary to hit number, they would hit the left leg. If they were 8 above, then it would be the left arm, etc.~~

~~Next, there are the critical details. The default version of the combat charts for AD&D 2nd Edition have a different chart for; Legs, Abdomen, Torso, Arms, and Head. Each chart has a number under "Severity" with a number ranging from 1 through 13+, and then a corresponding "Effect" for each number range.~~

~~All of the charts for Severity Ranges 1-3 have Effect "No unusual effect", so though the attacker hits, they just cause normal damage, but we now already have a hit location as to <u>where</u> they were hit when describing the attack, so that is more information than the default d20 system normally provides. Where it gets even more fun is with 4 through 13+.~~

~~Using the~~

~~Basic initial formula needs changing, because will miss a lot of the different critical variety....~~
~~For example 10 for head, will also always be the same result of 10 on critical details "Skull broken...",~~
~~and never have the lighter higts.~~

~~Again sticking with a math approach rather than rolling.....~~

~~If use their bonus as straight Effect result, then will be too consistently the same for the same player~~
~~(though more varied between different players).~~

~~If use the actual roll, without the bonus... would almost always be 13+ and too deadly.~~

~~If use actual roll minus 10... (without bonuses).....might work for lower results, but won't ever get~~
~~above 10.... so not quite right, more variety, but caps the high end (this might be desired by some Dms).~~

~~If use actual roll + bonuses, then subtract 10, this might work to cover the range and also have enough~~
~~variety of Effects results?~~

Change hit location as follows to make more sense in combat and without rolling hit location:
From most likely to be hit (and least likely to be fatal), to least likely/most critical (head).

~~Amount above total needed to hit:~~
~~1-2   Arm (shield/off)~~
~~3-4   Arm (weapon)~~
~~5-6   Leg (shield/off/leading leg)~~
~~7-8   Leg (weapon/rear leg)~~
~~9-10   Abdomen (or lower back)~~
~~11-12   Torso (or upper back)~~
~~13+   Head~~

~~So, if need 15 to hit, and rolled 15 with a +2 bonus for 17, which is 2 above 15 needed to hit, attacker~~
~~hits potentially critically the shield/off arm.~~
~~Now for effects, 17-10=7.~~
~~Effect = Armor damaged, arm struck, minor bleeding, if no armor, arm injured, minor bleeding.~~

~~Try another one. Need 20 to hit, roll 18 with +7 bonus for 25. Difference = 5.~~
~~Hit location = Leg (off).~~
~~Effects = 25-10 = 15 = 13+ on chart, Leg destroyed, no move or attack, severe bleeding, and triple~~
~~damage.~~
~~That is far too severe for only 5 above...~~
~~Problem is if based only on roll, can't ever be above 10 in severity, but if include to hit bonus, could~~
~~potentially always be too powerful in relation to the to-hit needed.....~~

Try different direction in calculation. Use Total -10 for hit location, and use total modified to hit roll difference as severity determination, that makes more sense yes?

These rules are expressed in terms that can work with any version of d20, whether OD&D, AD&D 1st, AD&D 2nd, D&D 3.x, D&D 4, or D&D 5th edition. With OD&D through 2nd Edition, it is based on charts and THACO, while D&D 3.x+ is based on the DC number for AC, either way, the key is simply knowing what the normal number needed to roll to hit is, and then just calculating the difference.

Formula:
Target Number (TN) needed to hit.
D20 Actual Roll (AR) before modifiers.
Total Hit Roll (THR) (d20 roll + modifiers).
Difference to Hit (DR)

THR-TN=DR
if DR=0, just roll normal HP damage
if DR=1-3, just calculate hit location and normal HP damage, but do not calculate Severity Results.
If DR=4+, calculate hit location, Severity Results (SR), and total HP damage (in this order).

Hit Location (HL) = AR-10, reference Chart #1 for Hit Location.
Hit Severity (HS) = THR-TN=DR, reference appropriate critical hits chart (bludgeon, piercing, slashing), appropriate to the already calculated Hit Location.

Don't worry about the abbreviations, it is just for expressing the formula.

What all this really means is that there are ZERO additional rolls for this system, just some quick and simple math calculations and simple chart consultation.

The first step is to determine if the hit was successful, if it exceeded the minimum to hit, and by how much.

If the total modified roll result is equal to the hit roll needed, then the hit only causes just normal damage (difference between to-hit number, and to-hit roll is 0).

If the difference is 1-3 above the necessary total to hit, then determine hit location and HP damage, but no need to calculate severity.

If the difference is 4+ above necessary total to hit, then determine hit location, hit severity, and HP damage.

Hit Location – Chart #1

So, if needing to determine hit location (if 1+ above needed to hit), it is calculated by subtracting 10 from the actual <u>rolled</u> d20 amount (without modifiers):

0-1   Arm (shield/off)
2-3   Arm (weapon)
4-5   Leg (shield/off/leading leg)
6-7   Leg (weapon/rear leg)
8   Abdomen (or lower back)
9   Torso (or upper back)
10   Head

This approach will ALWAYS yield a result between 0 to 10 (or a negative inverse).
If they rolled 9 or lower (and somehow still hit due to bonuses, prone, etc.), just use the negative number in the inverse, so if result is -3, would be.

Examples

Example 1

Need 15 to hit, roll 13, with a +2 combination of modifiers to hit for a total of 15.
Difference is 15-15=0. Do not determine hit location or severity, just roll normal HP damage.

Example 2

Need 15 to hit.
Rolled 13 with a +4 combination of modifiers to hit for a total of 17.
The difference is 17-15=2. This qualifies for hit location determination, though severity calculation is not necessary.
Hit location = 13-10=3, which would be the target's weapon arm.
Then roll normal HP damage, though narrating that it hit their arm (or arm armor), the target may grunt in pain, and maybe have a minor cut, abrasion, or bruise, but without any bleeding or breaking of bones or tendons, etc.

Example 3

Need 20 to hit.
Rolled 19, with +9 total modifiers, for a total of 28.
This is 8 above needed hit number, so definitely qualifies for both hit location and effects calculation.
Hit location
Is 19-10=9, which is Torso (or upper back).
Hit Severity Effects
Cross reference effects for appropriate weapon type (bludgeon, piercing, or slashing), under the Torso chart.
The total difference to determine severity is 8 above needed to hit, so it would be result 8 on the chart (we'll use piercing in this instance): Torso injured, Major Bleeding, ½ move, -4 penalty to all actions.

Example 4

Need 23 to hit.
Rolled 18, with a total of +19 in total modifiers (higher level), for total of 37.
This is 14 above needed hit number, so definitely qualifies for both hit location and effects calculation.
Hit location
Rolled 18 so 18-10=8, which is abdomen.
Hit Severity Effects
In this case using a bludgeoning weapon, cross reference for the Abdomen, the total difference between the total needed to hit, and actual total calculated roll is 14, so consult the 13+ Effects result: "Abdomen destroyed, victim killed".

Optional Rule for Fatal Hit Severity Effects

If not comfortable with being able to kill a target in a single (exceptional) blow, can optionally just use the next less-severe result, but keep the triple damage result to differentiate from a weaker hit.

Optional Rule for Called Shots

Called shots = penalty to hit is equal to the higher hit location number? For example if calling shot on shield arm, a -1, if weapon arm -3, if off leg -5, if weapon leg -7, if abdomen -8, if torso -9, if head -10. This can be interpreted as a minus to the attackers roll, or as a bonus to the target's total armor class.
If the attacker calls the shot, AND beats the modified total, then they get the critical result for that targeted location calculated as normal but at the desired location. If they do NOT beat that total, then the COMPLETELY MISS.
If this gets too easy to hit the critical parts (abdomen, torso, or head), the consider simply adding 4 to the modifier, or doubling the modifier.

Hit Location & Critical Charts

Piercing vs. Humanoids

Optional for play testing (pending feedback):
Use chart as listed for Original, Basic, and 1st Edition Dungeons & Dragons.
Subtract 2 from Severity results for 2nd Edition AD&D.
Subtract 6 from Severity results for 3rd edition D&D.
Subtract 8 from Severity results for 4th edition D&D.
Subtract 4 from Severity results for 5th edition D&D.

Minor bleeding = -1 hp/round
Moderate bleeding = -2 hp/round
Major bleeding = -4 hp/round
Severe bleeding = -8 hp/round
Critical bleeding = -16 hp/round
Bleeding wounds are cumulative.

Minor pain = -2 to all actions
Moderate pain = -4 to all actions
Major pain = -8 to all actions
Severe pain = -16 to all actions
Critical pain = -32 to all actions
Pain penalties are cumulative.

Location: Legs

Severity	Effect
0	General body mass, no specific hit location or injury.
1 – 3	Leg hit, glancing blow, but no specific injury beyond normal HP damage and hit location detail. No crit.
4	Leg grazed, target knocked down. Stunned 1 round. 1 full round to get back on feet.
5	Leg struck, minor bleeding (1 hp / round).
6	Leg armor damage (10%). If no lower leg armor: lower leg injured, minor bleeding, ¾ move rate, minor pain.
7	Leg armor damaged (25%), if no leg armor then upper leg is injured (½ move and moderate bleeding, minor pain. Stunned 1 round.
8	Leg armor damaged (25%). If no lower leg armor, lower leg struck, tendons torn, moderate bleeding, moderate pain. Stunned 1 round, movement ½.
9	Leg armor damaged (50%), ankle sprained, ¾ move, moderate pain. If no lower leg armor, strike through ankle, ankle dislocated, cartilage damaged, mild bleeding, moderate pain, ½ move. Stunned 1 round.

10	Leg armor damaged (50%). If no upper leg armor, strike through upper leg. Muscles severed, moderate pain, moderate bleeding. Movement ½. Stunned 2 rounds.
11	Leg armor damaged (50%), knee sprained, ¾ move, moderate pain. If no lower leg armor, knee broken, moderate bleeding, 1/3 move, moderate pain. Stunned 2 rounds.
12	Leg armor damaged (50%), leg struck, minor bleeding (-1 hp/rnd), minor pain, 2/3 move. If no leg armor: leg broken, major bleeding, 1/3 move, major pain.
13	Leg armor damaged (75%), leg struck, moderate pain, significant bruising, ½ move. If no leg armor: ham string (if hits back of leg, else quadraceps if front of leg) severed, narrowly missing artery, severe pain, moderate bleeding, ¼ move (dragging leg).
14	Foot armor destroyed (100%), foot struck, moderate pain, mild bleeding, ¾ move. If no foot armor: foot pierced, muscles severed, bones broken, cartilage damaged, moderate pain, moderate bleeding, ½ move.
15	Leg armor destroyed (100%), lower Leg broken, moderate bleeding, ¼ move, major pain. Double damage. If no armor, bleeding and pain is severe.
16	Hip broken, no move or attack possible, Severe pain, major bleeding. Double damage.
17	Upper leg broken, severe bleeding, no move or attack, major pain. Double damage.
18	Lower leg destroyed, no move or attack, severe bleeding, severe pain. Double damage.
19	Strike through upper leg. Artery severed, nerves cut, critical bleeding, critical pain. Triple damage.
20+	Leg severed, no move or attack, critical bleeding, critical pain. Triple damage.

Location: Arms

Severity	Effect
0	General body mass, no specific hit location or injury.
1 – 3	Lower arm hit, glancing blow, but no specific injury beyond normal HP damage and hit location detail. No crit.
4	Upper arm grazed, target spun around. Stunned 1 round.
5	Lower arm struck, minor bleeding (1 hp / round).
6	Lower arm armor damage (25%). If no lower arm armor: lower arm injured, minor bleeding, minor pain.
7	Upper arm armor damaged (25%), if no upper arm armor: then upper arm is injured, moderate bleeding, minor pain. Stunned 1 round.
8	Lower arm armor damaged (50%). If no lower arm armor, lower arm struck, tendons torn, moderate bleeding, moderate pain. Stunned 1 round.
9	Hand armor/gauntlet damaged (50%), wrist sprained, moderate pain, all actions with hand at -8 (in addition to pain modifier) until sprain healed. If no hand armor, strike through wrist, wrist dislocated, cartilage damaged, mild bleeding, moderate pain.

	Stunned 1 round.
10	Forearm armor damaged (50%). If no forearm armor, strike through forearm. Muscles severed, moderate pain, moderate bleeding. Use of arm at -8 (in addition to pain modifier). Stunned 2 rounds.
11	Lower arm armor damaged (75%), lower arm struck, minor bleeding (-1 hp/rnd), minor pain. If no leg armor: lower arm broken, major bleeding, arm useless, major pain.
12	Upper arm armor damaged (75%), Shoulder dislocated, arm useless until socket reset, moderate pain. If no upper arm armor, upper arm broken, moderate bleeding, arm useless, moderate pain. Stunned 2 rounds.
13	Upper arm armor damaged (75%), upper arm struck, moderate pain, significant bruising, use of arm at -4 (in addition to pain). If no upper arm armor: bicep severed (if hits front of arm, else triceps if rear of arm) severed, narrowly missing artery, severe pain, moderate bleeding, arm useless.
14	Hand armor/gauntlet destroyed (100%), hand struck, hand sprained, moderate pain, hand useless. If no hand armor: hand pierced, muscles severed, bones broken, cartilage damaged, moderate pain, moderate bleeding, hand useless.
15	Forearm armor destroyed (100%), forearm broken, mild bleeding, arm useless, major pain. Double damage. If no armor, bleeding and pain is severe. Stunned 2 round.
16	Forearm broken, arm useless, severe pain, major bleeding. Stunned 3 rounds. Double damage.
17	Upper arm broken, severe bleeding, arm useless, major pain. Stunned 3 rounds. Double damage.
18	Hand armor/gauntlet destroyed, wrist broken, major pain, mild bleeding, hand useless. Stunned 3 rounds. If no armor, hand severed, severe bleeding, severe pain, stunned 4 rounds. Double damage.
19	Strike through upper arm. Artery severed, nerves cut, critical bleeding, critical pain. Stunned 8 rounds. Triple damage.
20+	Leg severed, no move or attack, critical bleeding, critical pain. Stunned 2 rounds, then unconscious. Triple damage.