

*BY THE SWORD*TM

Perpendicularly Perfect

Tunnels & Corridors KitTM

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The hexagon is your friend. No, really! There are two branches to role-playing games, and fantasy role-playing games (FRPGs) in particular. Something they have in common is that, eventually, in every good story (game), the players' characters face combat situations. If you're new to this we'll try to break the news gently: your friends are going to try to kill you. Well not you personally (at least not on a good day) but your characters, those fictional figures you invest all your hard work and love into creating and playing.

In the earliest branch of FRPGs the moment this came was (still is) something of a free-for-all. Those of us who wanted more *structure* to those situations opted for more *tactical* FRPGs, which first appeared with the publication of Steve Jackson's seminal work *Melee*TM in 1977, the foundation to the FRPG *The Fantasy Trip*TM by the same author (which is currently back in print and available from *Steve Jackson Games*, we are happy to say).

Frankly some of us feel better about seeing our character incinerated by a dragon when we can see *why* our character was incinerated by a dragon. It's one thing when the gamemaster says "you are incinerated by the dragon", but it's something else when you can actually see you were standing too close to the dragon, you put yourself in that spot, you turned your back on the dragon, and it's all your own fault. You're dead either way (perhaps) but at least you can blame yourself for the misfortune, learn something from the experience, and do it differently next time. These are some of the dimensions (location, distance and facing) that *tactical structure* brings to the table.

And tactical structure is brought to the game, first and foremost, by the humble hexagon. Put down a hex map to play on and you suddenly have the means to regulate movement equally in all directions (squares don't do that because of the diagonals), and by extension from that, you can count range and distance equally in all directions. And you can face your character in 6 different directions; turning 60 degrees at a time is far more natural than the choices you get with squares. The tactical rules in every person-to-person combat game, as in the wargames that came first, follow from and are made possible by that lovely little hexagon.

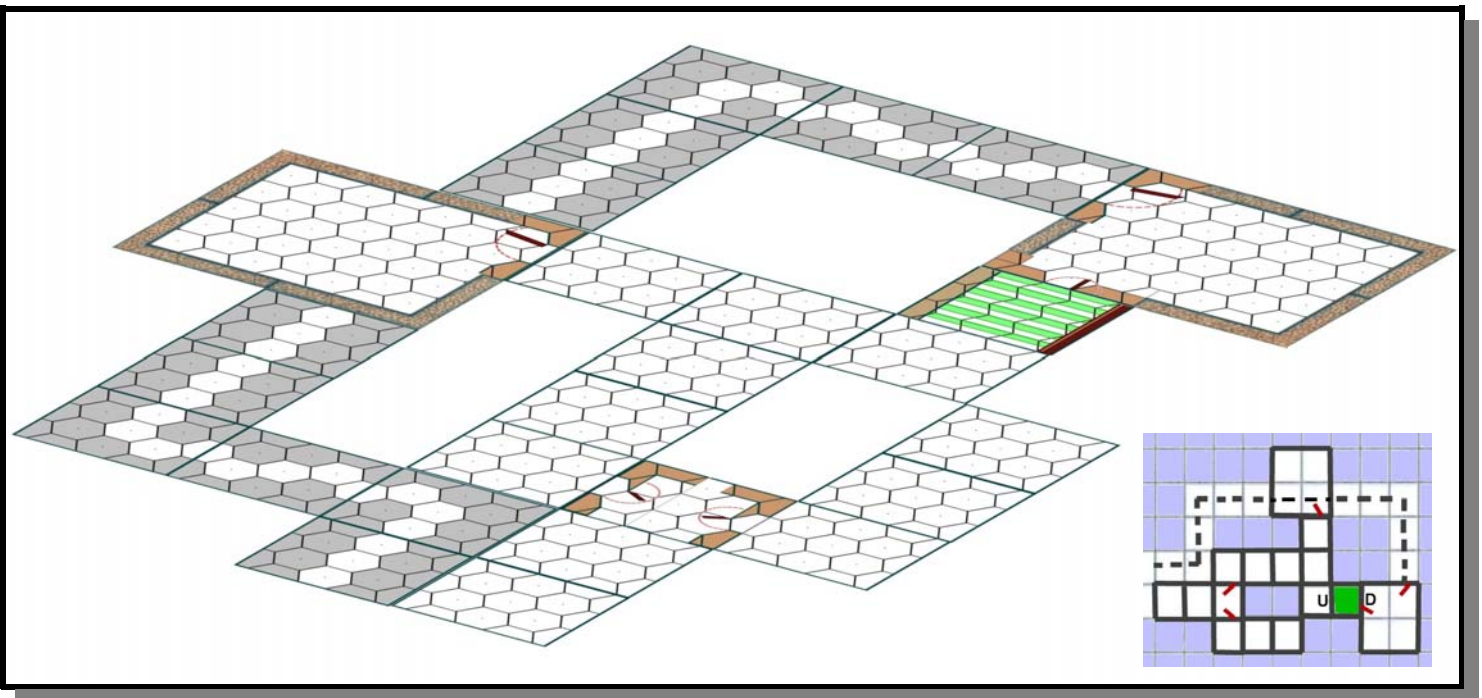
But as all gamemasters who have worked with hex paper know, the little 6-sided devils can also be a royal pain.

This is because you cannot join hexes to each other at right angles. Try as you might, you cannot arrange a bunch of hexes into a square or rectangle. The closest you can come is a parallelogram. Map a room or corridor by conjoining hexes and it always comes out looking

slant-sided or uneven. Many players hate the unnatural look of rooms and buildings that try to conform to a hex pattern, and some won't even play a game that otherwise requires hexes. That's not only unfortunate, it's entirely unnecessary!

Those of us who design the dungeons and layout the labyrinths, the gamemasters who create the adventures we play, have other problems with hexes. Finding hex paper in the first place can be difficult. Then if you're trying to plan an underground lair or tunnel system by mapping it on small hex paper, you may be in for a headache. It's no mean feat to create a maze that way, and have all the parts actually meet up the way you drew them when you lay it out for play on the table. The pieces don't always meet up or, if they do, you can't always join them depending on that grain in a hexagon pattern. That's also unnecessary!

This *Tunnels & Corridors Kit*™ provides a system that gives you the best of both worlds: hexes for tactical play and labyrinth tiles that join at right angles for easy design and mapping.



This is not a rules-specific play aid good for only one game. The *Perpendicularly Perfect Tunnels & Corridors Kit*™ should prove compatible with *any* person-to-person combat game that uses hexagons to regulate melee.

It can also be used as the basis for adding structured tactical movement and combat to games that lack this element. Dungeon maps for systems that do not already use hex grids can be adapted to do so more readily, owing to the fact those other system maps usually use right-angle passageways and rectangular structures that fit on graph paper to begin with.