Section 2: Getting Started

2.1 - Starting Quickly

Exile is designed to be as simple as possible to learn and play. If you, like many game-players, dislike reading the manual before jumping into the game, go ahead. It is recommended you read the Introduction (the next section), look at the illustrations to see what the buttons do, and, if you plan to design your characters from scratch (eventually a good idea), the section describing what the skills are. Also, the Hints For Getting Started section near the end of the manual contains some useful hints.

2.2 - Introduction:

The surface world is ruled by the Empire. That's what its called. The Empire. Not the Empire of Something, or the Something Empire. Just the Empire. It's understandable. There's no need for elaborate names when there's only one game in town.

There is the Empire. It is ruled by King Hawthorne. It has been there, for all practical purposes, forever. And it will probably always be there.

The Empire has made everything calm and orderly. The criminals? Timid, or dead. The Dragons? Dead. Fantastic creatures of all kinds? They were a sometimes difficult and always unpredictable presence. Now they're gone. Order at any cost was called for, and order was obtained.

But the Empire had mercy. It was ruled by humans, with human consciences. When the inevitable question of what to do about the misfits, the unruly, the generally awkward and useless originally came up, as it always does, the government opted for the simplicity of killing them. Recently, however, a group of reformers came into power, and they felt that this bloodshed had to stop. Just because someone opined that the Empire perhaps wasn't the best possible thing, it was decided, didn't necessarily mean that person should be killed. But something had to be done. On that everyone agreed. Order had to be maintained.

So, for five decades now, the Empire has rounded up the square pegs, the loudmouths, and the people just too independent for safety, and thrown them into a gigantic pit in the ground from which there could be no escape. There, they could live out their lives in peace, doing what they want, saying what they want, and never seeing the light of day again.

This worked so well, in fact, that the Empire started throwing the few magical creatures remaining into the pit as well. That these creatures might be a hazard to those already there was seen as a plus.

The grand experiment of teleporting misfits into the underworld was a great success, and caused nobody a bit of trouble. Well, at least as long as you weren't one of the ones thrown into the teleporter.

Unfortunately, someone has decided that perhaps the people above would be better off if you were no longer among them. So down you go...

2.3 - Starting the game

To run Exile, double click on the Exile icon. After a moment, you will be on the start screen. You have five options:

Load Saved Game -   Resumes a game you've already started. Select the save file to resume.
Create New Party -   Start a new game.
Shareware Info -   This screen gives the relevant information for when you decide
   to register Exile. This includes cost, address, and the registration code you will
   need to give when you register.
Register Exile -   When you register, you will be given a key (a large number).
   Select this option to enter the key to unlock the second half of the game.
Quit - Leave Exile.

When you are just starting, you'll want to select Create New Party...

2.4 - What is going on?:

You are group of adventurers, mages, thieves, and mixed malcontents, who have just been teleported, for crimes unknown and probably trivial, into the vast, labyrinthian underworld of Exile. There, you will meet the people who came before you, learn about the society that they have created, battle the nasty creatures that torment them, and ... and ...

And what? What is the goal? What are you trying to do?

That's a fair question. And there are many answers. Do you want to escape? Save the people of Exile from the dangers they face? Just explore, run around and kill? Wreak a horrid revenge on the surface world? Exile has many missions, some small, some large, some game-spanning. There are several ways to win the game, of varying difficulty. And there are towns and dungeons that just don't have much to do with anything.

Finding out how to save (or change, or destroy) the world will not be easy. You will need to search caverns, huge and small, convenient and remote, talking to people and searching for clues. And then, when you find out something you can do, you must make the harder choice: Is it something you should do?

So go to it! Pick a side, start swinging, and good luck.

2.5 - What is a party?:

A party is the group of up to 6 adventurers, called player characters (PCs for short). You can play a party of your own making, or get a prefabricated party provided by the game. When you first run the game, select 'Create New Party' from the opening screen. You can then choose whether to play a prefab party or make one from scratch.

If you choose the prefab party, just start playing. What your skills are good for is described in the next section.

If you make your party from scratch, you will, up to six times, go through windows to determine your character's skills, choose a graphic for your PC, and name your PC. To start the game, you must create at least one PC.

Skills: Each starting PC gets 60 skill points. Skill points are a sort of money you will spend on abilities.

When creating a character, the first thing that will happen is you will see the window where you spend your skill points. To spend skill points to increase an ability, press the '+' button next to it. Press the '-' button to undo the action. The cost in skill points to increase your value in each skill is the number before the slash in the 'Cost' column. The number after the slash isn't relevant yet (it becomes important when you train your characters).

Should you spend the points and be satisfied, press the 'Keep' button. If you want to start again, press cancel. When you buy and keep you skills, you go to the next step...

PC Graphic: Click on the button besides the graphic you want to use to represent your PC, or press cancel to begin the whole process anew.

PC Name: Finally, in the third window, choose a name for your character. It must begin with a non-space character.

What about sex? Race?:   You won't be specifically asked whether your character is male or female. If you want your warrior to be a woman, select a female graphic and appropriate name. Also, all your characters will be human. In the world of Exile, non-humans have this nasty tendency to be killed on sight, as you will soon see...

Making a New PC: Should you start with less than 6 PCs or drop one later on, you can get another. Return to Fort Exile, where you start, and approach the portal where you arrived. You will be given the option of making a new PC, who will then obligingly step though the portal.

To find out what all these skills are good for, keep reading...

2.6 - Getting To Know Your Characters:

Your little computerized people are, basically, a whole bunch of numbers, each determining how well he or she deals with the horrid threats the game will come up with. These are the most important statistics:

Level and Experience: These two numbers (starting at 1 and 0 respectively) represent how much stuff your character has done. Your experience goes up when you kill stuff and complete missions. For every 100 experience points you get, your level increases (up to a maximum of 50). When your level increases, you gain some health points and skill points (described below), and become a little better at everything you do. Alas, the higher your level, the less skill points and health you gain.

Skill Points: As mentioned before, these points are the money you will spend to increase your skills. After creating your character, you will spend them (along with some gold) at training schools, located in certain towns.

Current Health: This very important number represents how much punishment your PC can take before dying. Every time he or she is damaged, the number goes down. Time and magical healing raise it again, up to a certain maximum. Keep an eye on it!
Every skill point spent on health increases your maximum by 2.

Spell Points: This number represents how many and how powerful the spells your PC can cast. Whenever a spell is cast, you lose some spell points. Time and certain magic items bring the level back up.
Every skill point spent on spell points increases your maximum by 1. Also, every level of Mage Spells and Priest Spells (described below) bought while creating your character gives you three bonus spell points.

You can have a maximum of 200 health points and 100 spell points.
The myriad skills you can buy for your characters are described below. Each can attain a maximum level of 20, unless otherwise specified. The cost for each skill is in parenthesis after its name.

Strength (3):   Measures how much brute strength the character possesses. High strength increases damage done in combat, improves odds of kicking down doors, and has other, more subtle effects.
This stat also has a large effect on the health the PC gains when he/she gains a level. If it is below 4, there will be a penalty. If it is 1 or two, there will be a large penalty.

Dexterity (3):   Measure how nimble the character is. High dexterity gives a better chance of hitting in combat (esp. with missile weapons) and makes the character harder to hit. High dexterity also makes picking locks and disarming traps easier.

Intelligence (3):   Measures mental strength and dexterity. High intelligence also makes your spells more effective, sometimes very much so. Intelligence below 4 makes your spells works poorly.

The above three skills are important. When high, they give many bonuses in the things you do. On

the other hand, when one of these three skills is below 4, the PC will have penalties in any situation involving that skills. A PC in combat with a 1 dexterity will miss a lot.

Edged (2), Bashing (2), Pole (2), Thrown Missile (1), Bow (3):   The higher the skill, the better the chance to hit in the appropriate weapon type:

Edged: Daggers, swords, axes.

Bashing: Clubs, maces.

Pole: Spears, halberds, large axes.

Thrown Missile: Darts, Thrown daggers

Bow: Bows

Defense (2): This skill has three effects. It determines how well a character does at parrying, decreases the penalty in combat from bulky armor, and occasionally decreases the damage taken from enemies weapons.

Mage Spells (6), Priest Spells (5): These two skills are very expensive and very powerful. They enable the owner to cast spells of the appropriate type of a level up to the level of skill owned. The maximum level for both is 7.
       You automatically know all spells of level 3 and below. It takes some time to find spells of level 4 and above. Thus, getting these skills above level 3 at the beginning may not be a good idea.

Mage Lore (1): You will occasionally need to decipher strange magical readings. This skill determines how good you are at this. If your skill is high enough, you may gain a spell or a valuable piece of information.
       What is important when deciphering is how much of this skill is present in the party. One character with 18 Mage Lore is equivalent to 6 characters with 3 Mage Lore.

Alchemy (2):   You will eventually gain the ability to make magic potions. To make a given potion, however, your Alchemy skill much be above a certain level. The higher it is above this level, the better the chance of succeeding.
       When one PC is trying to make a potion, only that PCs Alchemy skill counts. Thus, it is much, much better to have one PC with high Alchemy skill than several PCs with low Alchemy skill.

Item Lore (4):   When you kill a monster, there will occasionally be items on its body. Normally, you wouldn't know what they were. However, Item Lore skill makes it possible that when you find the item, you will know what it is. Otherwise, you would have to take it to town and spend money to identify it.
       Item Lore doesn't do any good for identifying items you already have that aren't identified.
       The higher the Item Lore, the better the chance of the item appearing identified. In general, several PCs with low Item Lore is better than one PC with high Item Lore.

Traps (2):   Many chests and some corridors will have traps on them, which can be devastating. You will, however, be given a chance to pick a PC to disarm it. Chance of success depends on this skill.

Pick Locks (2): Many towns and dungeons will have locked doors. A PC with some of this skill and lock picks equipped can try to pick them. The higher this skill, the better. Beware. Some locks cannot be picked.

Assassination (4):   Sometimes, when a character attacks a much weaker monster, the blow will do a

good deal of extra damage. The more of this skill you have, the better the chance of this happening, and the stronger the monsters it can happen to.

Poison (2):   You will find poisons, which you can put on your weapons for a little extra punch. Having a few levels in this skill will make it more likely you will put the poison on at full strength, and the less likely you will nick yourself with the poison accidentally.
        Although you can buy a lot of this skill, 3-4 levels should be sufficient.

Luck (5):   This skill is expensive, but can be a bargain at twice the cost. Its effects are pervasive, subtle, powerful, and sometimes irreplaceable.

        Eventually, one way or another, you will have a party to control. At this point, you will be dumped into Exile. In particular, you will be in one of the towns there...

2.7 - The Menus:

        There are several menus with useful options:

Options Menu:
        This menu enables you to change aspects of how the game is played. The first two choices turn the sound on and off and make the game move faster and slower. The next two options enable to you select new names and graphics for your characters. The alchemy selection shows you a list of all alchemical concoctions you know how to make.
        The last item, "Save Maps", is the most important. When selected, your parties maps will be included in your save file. This will make your save files about 50K larger, but you won't need to remap the towns and dungeons every time you restart.

Help Menu:
        This menu calls up handy reference pages for most of the info in this manual.

Font Menu:
        To change the font for the text displays.

Library Menu:
        This very useful menu can be used to bring up windows with helpful information on a variety of topics. You can get screens with detailed info on mage and priest spells, as well as descriptions of the skills and advice on how and when to buy them. There is also a summary of how alchemy and poison is used, and a very handy list of helpful hints and time-saving tips. A quick browse through the last is recommended.

Actions Menu:
        People who prefer to play with the mouse can select Mass Get and Wait 40 Times from this menu.
        Mass Get has you pick up all items near your party. Wait 40 Times has you pause, while your health and spell points return. You can only select this option while in a town or dungeon and not in combat. Neither of these options work when a hostile creature is in sight.