Section 3: Getting Started

3.1 - Starting Quickly

Exile II 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), the overview of the most important commands (the section before), 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.

If you were lucky enough to have played Exile: Escape From the Pit, you will have a very easy time getting into the swing of things here. The commands are basically the same, and the differences will be pretty easy to pick up as you go along.

3.2 - 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.

For many year, the Empire, in its arrogance, banished everyone it felt didn't fit in. Eccentrics, petty criminals, malcontents, they were all regarded as undesirable by the Empire. And, for many years, these unwanted citizens were send into Exile.

Exile was not just a status, however. It was (and is) an actual place. Exile is a network of hundreds of miles of caves and tunnels, forming an enormous, weblike labyrinth of warrens under the surface of the world. Kept lit my magic, fed by fungus, and populated by the unending stream of humans (and humanoids) from the surface, the people of Exile struggled by as best they could for many years.

When Exile was established, however, the Empire, complacent and arrogant, made its greatest mistake. It send down several mages, powerful mages, who were on the wrong side of a political struggle. The winners, Emperor Hawthorne and the archmage Garzahd, were confidant that sending down these archmagi would not be a problem. They even thought that maybe their skills could later be harnessed, once they were beaten down by several years rotting in the sunless lands.

They could not have been more wrong.

Some of the exiled wizards, like Rone, and Solberg, and Patrick, were content simply building a better life for the Exiles. One of them, however, was named Erika Redmark. A harsh and vindictive incantatrix, she enlisted a band of adventurers, made tough by their years below, in a wild, dangerous, and eventually successful scheme. She wanted to assassinate Hawthorne, brilliant Emperor of the surface world.

Five years later, Hawthorne was killed in his own throne room.

The response was immediate, and vicious. First, the portal into Exile was closed. Nobody was to be sent through. Second, other portals were created, to remote areas of Exile. Soldiers were sent there, the finest soldiers in the Empire's army. They was one mission: Vengeance. Not one citizen in this subterranean den of vipers was to escape alive.

Teleporting people into Exile is a difficult and draining task, and so Exile was not flooded with enemy troops. Still, the soldiers that did come down have already taken a quarter of Exile, and are moving steadily inward, taking cave after cave and city after city. If nothing is done, Exile will be doomed, and you with it.

Your job now is not to fight the Empire, however. You have just arrived at Fort Ganrick, a tiny fort in the farthest outskirts of your nation. Your job - help fight a den of sinister Nephilim (savage, feline humanoids). Thankless and dangerous work, and far from dealing with the great threat you all face. However, it is possible that circumstances will change. It is possible that chance will seize you and pull you into the center of the story you are all living. Perhaps something is about to happen that will shake everything apart, and you will have to put it back together again.

Perhaps that could happen. You're about to find out...

3.3 - 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 II. 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...

3.4 - What is going on?:

You control a group of several adventurers (called player characters, or PCs, for short) who live in a land called Exile. Exile is a nation underground. The people of Exile live in caves far underground, growing pale in the dim green light of mushroom fungus, and growing thin on diets of lizards and moss. You aren't there by choice - you were thrown down there by the Empire, the cruel autocracy that rules the surface world. You have just arrived at Fort Ganrick, in the northwest corner of Exile, where you are supposed to... 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? Battle the Empire armies invading your land? Seek and slay bizarre creatures somewhere else? 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.

3.5 - 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.

When you hit Create New Party, you will be given the introduction the the game. Hit Done when you're through with it. Then you will see the Party Creation window. You will be given six prefabricated characters, each with preassigned skills and abilities. To get rid of a prefab PC, hit the Delete button by its name, and then hit the Create button. When your party is how you want it, press the Done button to start Chapter 1.

Using this window, you can select each of your character's names, graphics, race, advantages/disadvantages, and skills.

Race, PC Traits: Each of your characters can be one of three different races, and have any of several advantages or disadvantages. These traits will help of hinder your character in various ways. They will also affect how quickly your character gains strength. If you take a character with lots of advantages, he or she will gain skills at a much lower rate. If there are lots of disadvantages, the character will gain skills faster.

These are the races and character traits. The percentage following each trait is how much slower this character will gain experience. A negative number means the character will gain experience faster.

Races:
Human (0%): The default race. The vast majority of Exile citizens are human. Being human conveys no notable advantages or disadvantages.
Nephilim (%12): The Nephilim are a race of nimble, feline humanoids. They get a bonus when using missile weapons. Also, when character creation is completed, each Nephilim character gains 2 bonus points of dexterity.
Slithzerikai (%20):   The Slithzerikai are an ancient race of reptilian humanoids. There are two faction of Sliths in Exile. Some of them are friendly and allied with your people, and some of them are cruel and barbaric, and fight you whenever they get the chance. Slithzerikai are trained from birth to use pole

weapons, and get a sizable bonus when attacking with them. Also, when character creation is completed, each Slithzerikai character gains 2 bonus points of strength and 1 bonus point of intelligence. Finally, Slithzerikai are resistant to poison.

PC Traits:
Toughness (%10): A character with toughness is protected from damage. Practically any sort of assault does less damage.
Magically Apt (%20): This powerful trait makes most spells cast by the PC more effective.
Ambidextrous (%8): When using a weapon in each hand, the second weapon is used with a large penalty. This trait removes that penalty.
Nimble Fingers (%12): This trait makes the owner much better at picking locks and disarming traps.
Cave Lore (%6): The character with this trait is very familiar with the flora and fauna of the caves. When traveling, you will occasionally gain food from hunting. Also, this trait has other, subtle effects. Make sure at least one PC has it.
Good Constitution (%10): This trait makes the character more resistant to poison and disease.
Sluggish (-%10): This character has much slower reactions. He or she will get one less action point in combat.
Magically Inept (-%8): This character never got the knack of using magical items, and, for some reason, they just don't work on him or her. The PC with this trait cannot use magic items.
Frail (-%8): This PC is a natural target for colds and other illnesses. They easily take advantage of the PC's weak constitution. Poison and disease have more of an effect.
Pacifist (-%40): Either because of squeamishness, fear of blood, mental weakness, or holy beliefs, this character will not strike a blow. This character cannot attack in hand to hand, or cast any spell targeted on a specific area. This trait gives a considerable experience bonus, but is it worth it?

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

When you press the Skills button, you will see a window where you can increase and decrease this PCs skills. 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: To assign a PCs graphic, press the Graphic button. Click on the button besides the graphic you want to use to represent your PC, or press cancel to begin the whole process anew.

If you have a Nephilim or Slith character, it is recommended (though not necessary) that you pick a graphic from that race.

PC Name: To choose a name for your character, press the Name button. 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. Go to any of the major towns in Exile, and select Create New PC from the Options menu.

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

3.6 - 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 (adjusted up or down for race and PC traits), 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 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 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.

IMPORTANT - Strength also affects how much health you gain when you attain a level. Buy strength up to 3 as soon as possible. Otherwise, you won't gain much health when you gain levels.

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 work 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, flails.

Pole: Spears, halberds, large axes, slith spears.

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.

Bulky armor prevents a character from casting mage spells. However, when your armor is only a little too bulky, sometimes casting a mage spell will work when the mage has high defense skill.

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 most 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. Mage lore also determines what monsters appear in the Monster Roster Library function.

What is important when trying to decipher something 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.

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.

Item lore does not affect items already in town when you enter, or items gained in special encounters.

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...