

Hard West

Gameplay Manual (Rev 1)

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Introduction

Hard West is a tactical combat game set in the Weird West where you control anywhere from one to four characters at a time. You and the enemy perform your actions in turns which means that you are given as much time as you need to assess the situation and give orders. The key to success is analyzing the environment and making good use of cover and your posse's many unique abilities.

Between the tactical encounters you always visit a strategic map where you are free to explore the Weird West, discover locations, interact with a variety of more often than not mean-spirited individuals, stock up on equipment and shape your team members' abilities.

The game is separated into eight individual scenarios which tell stories of their own but many things carry over between them, be it the status of recurring characters or the consequences of some decisions made in the past.

Saving and Loading Progress

Hard West saves progress automatically at checkpoints after each tactical encounter on the strategic map and at the beginning of each fight. Progress is also saved at any point when ending the game while on the strategic map. Whenever the game is being saved this icon appears on screen:



Please make sure you do not forcefully close the game while the icon is visible, otherwise your saved game may get corrupted.

Hard West maintains a separate checkpoint for each scenario, allowing you to skip between scenarios as you like without losing any progress. You can continue the game by clicking on *Load last checkpoint* either in the main menu or on the scenario selection screen. Continuing the game from the main menu will continue the game from the checkpoint saved most recently.

Tactical Combat Overview

Basic attributes

The basic gameplay mechanics revolve around three basic stats for each character:

- Hit points (HP)
- Action points (AP)
- Luck

The first two are self explanatory. HP determine how much damage a character can take before he dies while AP determine how many actions they can perform in a given turn. Luck, on the other hand, is a mechanic unique to *Hard West* which both provides an additional layer of protection and serves as the resource used to power many active abilities (more about that later).



The status of your currently active character.



During tactical combat all these attributes are displayed on the HUD in the bottom right corner of the screen, hit points being represented by a heart and a red bar, luck by a horseshoe and green bar and action points by stars.

Moving the Camera

You can never see the map in its entirety but since the action in *Hard West* takes place in a 3D environment you can freely move the camera around. You can scroll in two ways:

- Moving the mouse cursor to the edge of the screen (only in fullscreen mode)
- Using the **W**, **A**, **S** and **D** keys



You can also turn the camera in 90° steps by clicking on the  and  icons on the left side of the screen or by pressing the **Q** and **E** keys.

Most maps feature buildings and other structures with several floors. You switch floors by pressing the **Page Up** and **Page Down** keys or simply by using the **mouse wheel**.

Note: This manual assumes that you play using a mouse and keyboard setup to control the game. For a quick overview of the gamepad controls please look up the “controls” section. The game always displays the corresponding button prompts for navigating and using the menus.

Selecting Characters

Orders can only be given to the currently active character. The game does automatically switch characters as action points are depleted but you can manually switch characters at any given time in three different ways:

- Clicking directly on your character in the 3D view
- Using the **F1** - **F4** keys
- Using the **Tab** and **Shift** keys
- Clicking on the corresponding portrait in the bottom left corner of the screen:



Moving

Moving is one of the most basic actions which you can perform in exchange for action points in *Hard West*. To make your character move to a certain tile simply point at it and **right click**. Moving is an action that does not end the character's turn unless it depletes the action points so you are free to:

- Move one action point's worth and perform another action (such as shooting)
- Move one action points' worth and then move again
- Move two action points' worth, ending the character's turn




The movement range is visualized by borders on the ground - notice the curve highlighting the exact route your character is going to take if you confirm this move.

The movement range of your character is displayed in form of glowing borders on the ground. You can always see one of them if an action point is available. If you have two action points available and hover the mouse beyond that initial range a second border appears displaying how far you can move spending two action points at once.

Shooting

If a valid target (usually an enemy character, indicated by a red badge above him) is in range, the shoot action becomes available. Before performing the actual shot you enter targeting mode in which you can select targets and preview the effects of your shot. You can enter targeting mode in three ways:

- Clicking directly on a target in the 3D view
- Clicking on one of the red markers displayed on the lower right side of the HUD
- Clicking on the  icon in the ability bar on the bottom of the screen

You can also cycle through all available targets without leaving and re-entering targeting mode by using the methods above or:

- Using the **Tab** and **Shift** keys
- Clicking on the arrows in the targeting panel

Note: sometimes enemy badges are represented as solid metal instead of a red surface. When this is the case it means that your posse is aware of that enemy's presence but the currently selected character does not have a line of sight. They may still be able to fire, however!



In the panel you can see the kind of cover the target is in, what the chances to hit are and how much damage the shot is going to deal if it hits. You can also click on the *More Info* button on the right side of the panel to reveal a detailed breakdown of all the factors that constitute your current chance to hit the target. If you are satisfied with the prospects of your shot confirm the shot either by clicking on the *Confirm* button or pressing the **Enter** key. You can also cancel targeting mode by pressing the **Escape** key.

When shooting also pay attention to the range modifier below the weapon panel:



The color represents the optimal range of your weapons. The indicator slides along the bar as you move the cursor over the map. If the distance to a target is anywhere in the orange to green area of the display the shot will receive an accuracy bonus.

Note that the vast majority of weapons instantly deplete a character's action points if fired and he won't be able to move or perform another action that turn. The cost of any action and whether using it will instantly end the turn is indicated by these two icons in the targeting panel:




The single star indicates a cost of 1 AP, the hourglass that firing this shot will end the character's turn regardless of AP.

Switching and Reloading Weapons

A character can carry up two weapons at once, both displayed in the bottom left corner of the HUD, the currently selected one being highlighted on the left side:



Weapons can be switched at no cost in APs by either left clicking on them or pressing the **T** key. It's a good idea to be prepared for different tactical situations. A slow-firing, powerful weapon and something quick with a number of shots between reloads make a good combo.

A weapon has to be reloaded once in a while, some sooner than others. The current and maximum amount of ammo in the currently wielded gun can be seen below the weapon display. It can be reloaded either by clicking on the  icon or by pressing the **R** key. The amount of ammo restored per reload differs among guns.

Note that reloading costs one action point and it is often a good idea to switch weapons rather than reloading.

Reaction Shots

A highly important thing to know about are reaction shots. If you get too close to enemies who can already see you they will take a free shot at your character during your turn. An enemy's reaction shot range is displayed as a red circle on the ground if you move the cursor next to him:



This move will trigger a reaction shot as the path leads through the reaction shot range marked by the red circle surrounding the enemy.

Always pay attention to the curve highlighting your character's route when planning a move in the vicinity of an enemy and make sure it does not cross the enemy's reaction range. Keep in mind that an enemy won't execute a reaction shot if he did not see you before your move, allowing you to bypass the reaction shot area with clever planning. Note that the enemies knowingly avoid entering your reaction shot range.

In essence, the reaction shot represents an inevitable reaction to an attempt to get very close to an alert enemy (meaning one who sees your character coming). While there is some similarity to the overwatch mechanic seen in other turn-based games, in *Hard West* its main purpose is to prevent players from exploiting the point-blank accuracy bonus without consequences.

Items and Abilities

Aside from moving and shooting you can also use items carried by your characters or make use of abilities.



An ability bar of a character with two usable items and two active abilities.

Items and abilities are generally used the same way shooting and reloading are: a targeting panel appears which lists the costs and describes the effects. Items such as healing elixirs or different kinds of throwable bombs can only be used once and need to be replaced between fights. Abilities, on the other hand, can be used infinitely but may have a cooldown period before they become available again. Some abilities require an amount of luck for activation.

Interactive Objects

On many maps you will find interactive objects such as doors and levers as well as shootable ones. There are five kinds of interactive objects:



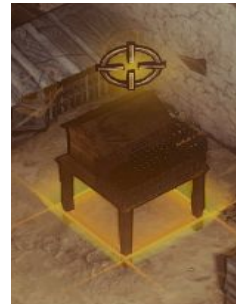
*Doors
Ricochet Obj.*



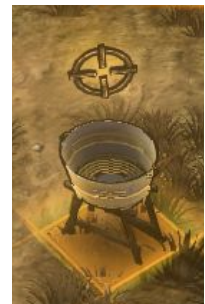
Dynamic Cover



Usable Objects



Shootable Obj.



Doors are self-explanatory: by default they are usually closed and can be opened by right clicking on them. If a door is within a character's reach they will open it instantly, if it is out of reach the character will automatically approach it given enough AP to perform the move. The act of opening the door does not cost any AP. If a door is interactive a door icon will appear on it upon hovering with the cursor above it. Characters will also automatically pass through most doors if ordered to move anywhere past them. Locked doors, marked with a padlock, require you to fulfill special requirements first such as locating a key.

Dynamic cover is a special kind of object that becomes or turns into better cover if used. Flippable tables are a common example. A curved arrow appears above dynamic cover when hovering above with the cursor and the tiles from which it can be used are highlighted.

Usable objects are environmental objects such as levers or winds. The exact effect of using such an object differs from case to case. Cogs appear when hovering the cursor above a usable object and the tiles from which it can be used are highlighted.

Shootable objects can be targeted and shot at just like enemies, the biggest difference being obviously that they won't move or shoot back. Being static objects they are also easier to hit than enemies. Like in case of usable objects the purpose of as well as the effects of hitting a shootable object differ hugely case by case. A crosshair appears when hovering above a shootable object.

Ricochet objects are a special kind of shootable object that can only be used with the ricochet ability. It creates custom lines of fire by bouncing bullets off those objects. A crosshair appears when hovering above a ricochet object but only if the current character has the ricochet ability.

Cover

The key to victory in *Hard West* lies mostly in proper use of cover. There are two kinds of cover, half cover and full cover, indicated by shields appearing next to walls and objects when moving the mouse next to them.



The frames surrounding the markers indicate characters' cover.

Walls and other solid obstacles too low to stand behind are half cover, walls and other solid obstacles that are high enough to obscure a standing person are full cover. Full cover reduces the chance to get hit much more effectively than half cover but the amount of damage reduction of cover depends on the shooter's gun. Some guns deal equal damage to targets in either cover type but no gun deals more damage to targets in full cover than in half cover.

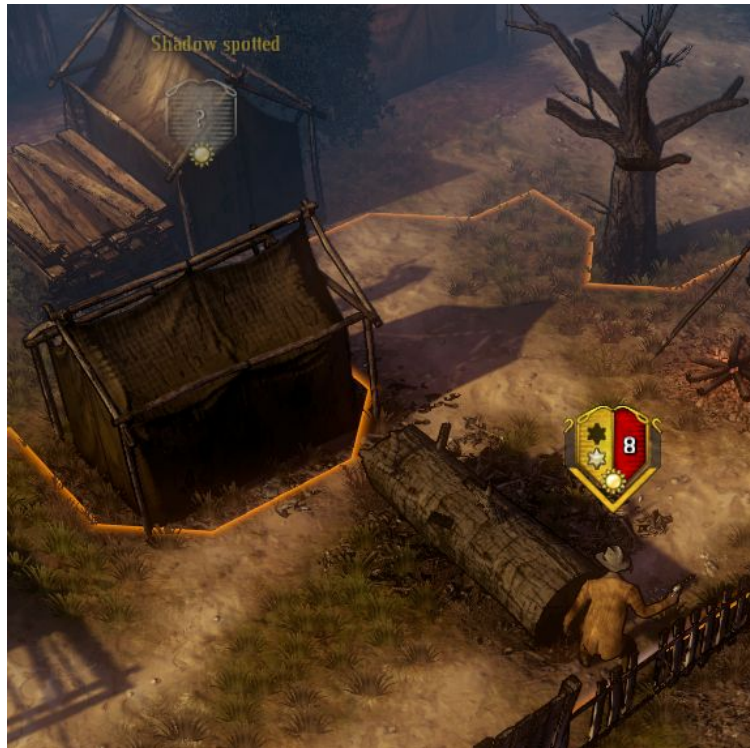
Cover is only effective if it's located between the shooter and the target so it is important to keep your posse on the move, avoiding the enemy's flanking attempts, and flanking enemies in return. Note that cover is only compromised past a 90 degree angle as illustrated below:



In the picture on the left the enemy is in full cover from the player character. In the picture on the right he has been flanked and lost all cover bonuses from shots fired by our character.

Shadow spotting

One of *Hard West*'s unique features is shadow spotting. Often enemies are out of sight while their shadows are not. Whenever this is the case an enemy's shadow and his badge are visible even without a direct line of sight and the enemies themselves are signified by a red marker on the ground.



An enemy behind a tent has been spotted by his shadow.

Note no line of sight does not mean no line of fire. If a spotted enemy is located behind a soft object, such as a tent or hedge, you can still fire at them, albeit with a penalty to accuracy.

Hint: shadow spotted enemies are often excellent targets for the ricochet ability if a suitable object is in range.

Luck

As stated before luck is one of the three fundamental attributes of characters in *Hard West*. Above all it is a layer of protection. In *Hard West*'s combat there is no randomness, instead, the target's luck is reduced by the shooter's chance to hit and only if the target's luck hits zero the character is hit.

Whenever a character is hit, luck is in turn replenished. How much luck a character can receive for being shot differs from character to character but the resulting luck will never exceed the maximum luck indicated by the luck bar.

The underlying idea is to prevent a repeated series of hits or misses to give shootouts a more realistic and cinematic feel in the Western sense of the word. The fact that Luck also powers abilities adds another tactical layer to the equation.

Setup Stage

Some tactical missions in *Hard West* start out in setup stage, sometimes you will also return into setup stage during a mission. If you're in setup stage enemies do not consider you a threat which means that you can explore the map or position your posse before the actual combat starts. Enemies remain passive during this mode, giving you the time and freedom to carefully prepare your strike.

Combat is initialized the moment you perform an aggressive action like firing a gun, throwing a bomb or using an offensive ability. However, even if you don't start slaughtering enemies there is only so much you can do before your cover is blown and enemies draw their guns on you. Setup mode is where your characters' heat parameters, displayed as skulls above your active character's portrait, come into play. Both, a character's own heat and that of their equipped guns determine how suspicious and intimidating they are.



The heat bar as it is visible during tactical encounters.

In setup mode the reaction shot ranges are replaced with suspicion cones, the range of which depends on your active character's heat (larger the higher your heat is). Rather than triggering a reaction shot, entering these cones makes enemies suspicious. Once an enemy's status turns suspicious, a counter will appear above their badge, counting down at the end of each turn and each time one of your characters enters their suspicion cone.



The cone makes it clear that this move will make the guard suspicious. A floating text confirms this.

Note that the length of the initial suspicion countdown depends on the kind of enemy you're dealing with and how jumpy they are. Soldiers protecting a fort may be quicker to draw their gun on you than some bandits minding their own business. Some actions, such as opening a prison cell door while a guard is watching, can also instantly trigger combat.

Subdue

During setup stage all of your characters have access to an ability only available out of combat: subdue. Using subdue on an enemy delays their suspicion counter but it will also trigger it if the enemy had not been suspicious before. The length of the delay depends on the subduing characters' heat parameter - a longer delay the higher the heat is. Subdue can be used repeatedly on the same enemy to keep them grounded for a longer time but the effect of subdue instantly ends the moment combat is triggered. Note that subduing an enemy counts as a hostile action so don't do it in front of another enemy.



An enemy gets subdued for four turns, as indicated by the number above her marker.

Strategic Map Overview

Between combat encounters players always visit the strategic map which shows a larger portion of the region the current scenario takes place in. Your posse is symbolized by a floating skull. You move it by clicking anywhere on the map. Like during tactical combat you can move the camera by either moving the cursor the edge of the screen (only in fullscreen mode) or by using the **W, A, S, D** keys.

Locations

Places where you can perform actions are called locations. These are usually structures or settlements and can be found all over every map. Locations can have one of three states: Open, locked and hidden.



A typical view of the strategic map with locations in all three states visible.

Open locations that you can interact with are signified by a black marker and have their names displayed on the ground. Locations you have not visited since they last opened are highlighted by a golden glowing column. Left click on open location to move there and open the location panel.

Locked locations lack the markers and name. Your characters know that these locations exist but currently have no business there, as such you cannot enter them. They may become open once you fulfill certain requirements but they may also remain locked for the remainder of the scenario, depending on your actions and choices.

Hidden locations are signified by a brown fog. These are locations that your posse has not yet discovered. They will become visible once specific requirements have been met.

The Location Panel

Upon entering a location the location panel appears. There you get to choose the action your characters perform, be it interaction with other characters, environmental actions such as mining or trading and healing. To make a choice simply click on the corresponding entry in the list below the text.



A typical location panel giving you the option to engage in trading, hand over an item or leave.

Actions are divided into several categories and represented by the following icons:



Decision: Make a decision that will have permanent effects.



Pay: Make a decision that requires you to have certain items on you.



Information: Inquire about a certain issue or perform another action to gain information.



Next: Continue to the next part of the current passage.



Combat: Initiate a tactical encounter.



Barter: Engage in barter with a merchant.



Leave: Leave the current location and close the location panel or return to the previous panel.

Note that you can only close a location panel if a “leave” option is available. Sometimes you can’t just walk away and need to make an important decision or let things take their course.

Money

Money is of great importance in *Hard West*. You need it to hire gunmen, buy equipment, bribe people and many other things. You can always check on the amount of money your posse carries in the inventory on the character panel but it is also displayed in the upper right corner of the strategic map.

Custom Scenario Mechanics

In each scenario you will be confronted with a unique gameplay mechanic represented by a unique panel on the screen. Short explanations for all of them are listed below, without going into too much detail of their story context to avoid spoilers.

Hard Times

During the first scenario you decide the fate of a family trying their luck as miners during a gold rush. You get to buy equipment and learn new mining techniques as you try to gain as much gold as possible from the many mining spots in the dreaded land. Only during this scenario you will find this panel:



The number of mining licenses you currently own determines how many mining operations you can perform (but some mining operations require several licenses). You acquire more licenses as you make progress through the scenario.

The three icons on the right represent your skill in the three conventional mining methods:



Rinsing



Deeper Gold Mining



Hard Rock Gold Mining

Each method can be improved individually by learning from experienced miners at a cost, raising the multiplier depicted next to it and thus the results of mining operations based on this method. The advanced methods give you access to more mining options but what method will yield the best results depends on the mining site.

You can also apply unconventional methods using special equipment. These methods have special purposes and effects:



Hydro Jet

Moves deeper gold reserves to rinsing level.



Drilling

Moves hard rock level reserves to rinsing level.



Stamp Mill

Moves all gold reserves to rinsing level.



Mercury

Mines all gold in the location at the cost of poisoning.

As Good as Dead

In this scenario the goal is to deal vast damage to a powerful businessman's empire, a secondary goal is to kill as many of his men as possible. A special panel allows you to keep track of how you're doing:



The damage, done by performing the corresponding actions on the strategic map, counts towards your main goal. Kills are accumulated both during tactical encounters and actions on the strategic map. The bounty determines how people interact with you and what offers you will receive from merchants.

Graveyard Shift

In this scenario you are confronted with starvation. As you travel between locations time passes and at the end of each day food must be distributed between your posse members. The time of day is indicated by a panel unique to this scenario:



The current time of day advances by one step each time you visit a new location. At nightfall you are presented with a special location panel that tracks the state of your men and allows you to distribute food among them as you see fit. As they starve they will suffer increasingly devastating debuffs. Characters will never die from starvation, however.

Food is hard to come by and inevitably you will have to make tough decisions and choose who gets to eat and who does not. You can always keep track of your food reserves via a small counter beneath your gold reserves in the upper right corner of the screen:



On Earth as it is in Hell

During On Earth as it is in Hell your first major task is to assemble an elite posse by travelling between locations and hiring the most talented gunmen possible. The following display allows you to keep track of your progress:



The leader, Warren, is pre-defined by the story but there are three slots for posse members of your choice. Next to each gunman's portrait you can see his name and his optimal role in tactical combat. Aside from that you can see his world map specialty which determines what kind of additional options and benefits you receive for having this character on your team on the strategic map.

Note that completing the optional scenarios first will allow you to hire additional characters during *On Earth as it is in Hell*.

In Gold we Trust

You take part in a dangerous expedition into uncharted areas in pursuit of fortune. You are in charge of peons hired from local villages and need to keep them well-fed if you want them to work effectively. The current status of your men and resources is represented by the following panel:



Healthy peons are your workforce currently able to perform labor while provisions are a resource necessary for the men to work efficiently. Injured peons are in no condition to work unless you nurture them back to health. Dead peons are the poor souls that are lost forever. This number has no other purpose than weighing heavily on your conscience.

Camp

At any point during the scenario you have access to your camp which is relocated as you make progress with your expedition. From here you can send scouts in search of new locations, organize hunts and heal both your peons and posse members at the expense of provisions.

Peon Actions

In most locations you can let your peons perform tasks such as hunting, mining or excavating a ruined structure. The amount of necessary peons differs, as do the risks and costs of an action. Generally a peon action costs as many provisions as peons are required to perform it. If you have run out of provisions you can still force the men to work but at a vastly increased risk of sustained injuries and even fatal casualties.

Posse Actions

Some more basic tasks such as mining gold in a river or hunting can also be performed by your posse. Failure during one of these actions will mean injuries sustained by one of your posse members, however. Letting your posse to the work itself should be considered a last resort if you have both run out of peons and resources.

Method in Madness

During this scenario you assume the role of a brilliant inventor. He has the ability to conduct research in different fields, the progress of which is visualized by this panel:



Research is conducted at the laboratory at the cost of one blueprint per level. Blueprints are acquired on the strategic map by advancing the story and performing optional tasks. There are three fields, engineering, gunsmithing and chemistry, and you to decide which field you wish to spend your next blueprint on.

Each advance grants specific benefits which are described in the location panel before confirming the research. Most notably you develop and patent new equipment which can then be crafted in the workshop location next to the laboratory. Additionally some location panel choices may only be available with sufficient research completed in a particular area.

Law and Order

In *Law and Order* you roam the land in pursuit of pieces necessary to assemble a special device called cipher. The pieces are embedded in the bodies of your enemies, most of whom can be found and killed on the strategic map. Progress is illustrated by a special display:



The cipher consists of many elements and with each additional piece the device gets closer to completion. However, information about the identities of the men with the pieces embedded in their bodies is costly. You have to choose if you are willing to pay the price or will engage in mindless slaughter until the cipher piece is found. Each slaughter has its consequences that may come back at you in unexpected ways. Putting a mine out of business may have a bad effect on gun prices and some people might not be too happy if the brothel is burned to the ground.

A Matter of Time

In *A Matter of Time*, you assume the role of a character with the gift of precognition. Precognition allows you to perform special actions on the exploration panels. Unique to this scenario are the following actions:



Precognition: Use a vision (increases cooldown).



Rest: Decrease Precognition cooldown.

Precognition puts a major strain on the clairvoyant's mind and she needs to be rested to be able to use her gift. For this purpose a special precognition panel is displayed in the bottom left corner of the strategic view of this scenario:



In need of rest.



Ready to use precognition.

The precognition panel indicates how well rested the clairvoyant is and whether she can use her precognitive abilities or not. The bar needs to be fully charged before precognition can be used.

Note that sometimes your talent of precognition is particularly exerted, putting extraordinary strain on the clairvoyant's mind, and prolonging the cooldown.

There are two ways to decrease the cooldown:

1. visit other locations (most unique locations decrease cooldown when visited)
2. or rest at an inn (there are two such locations in this scenario).

Visiting locations always decreases the cooldown by 1, while resting at an inn resets it completely, but requires a payment in cash and may give your enemies time to track you down (which may result in negative status effects).

Control Reference

Default Keyboard Layout

Note: Commands marked with an asterisk () cannot be remapped.*

*Select character / target	Left mouse button	
*Confirm move (tactical map)	Right mouse button	
*Confirm move (strategic map)	Right mouse button	Left mouse button
Move camera forward	Up cursor	W
Move camera back	Down cursor	S
Pan camera left	Left cursor	A
Pan camera right	Right cursor	D
Turn camera clockwise	Q	
Turn camera counter clockwise	E	
Raise camera	Page Up	Mouse Wheel Up
Lower camera	Page Down	Mouse Wheel Down
Focus on active character	Home	Middle mouse button
*Confirm action	Enter	
*Cancel targeting mode	Escape	
End turn	Backspace	End
Next character / target	Tab	
Previous character / target	Left Shift	
Character quick select	F1...F4	
Ability quick select	0...9 Number Keys	
Switch weapon	T	
Quick reload	R	
Character screen / Inventory	I	

Gamepad Layout

Note: The gamepad controls cannot be customized.

