

So You've Never Larped Before (A Guide to the Pro System and Larp in General)

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Note: this book is full of information about larping, don't feel like you have to read it all at once! It's intended as a reference for anything you're not sure about. Feel free to skip around or skim, and read the Opening Ceremonies page on the Pro website for a shorter version of what you need to know.

LARP - An Overview

Larp is a fun, engaging, and rewarding activity. It tests physical, social, and mental acuity as much as you want it to, and is a great way to make friends.

If you come to a Pro event, you'll be expected to join in! Larp is not considered a very good "spectator sport" - you really have to experience it from the inside. That being said, you can always opt out of anything you don't want to do - brain teaser puzzles aren't everyone's thing, jumping across an imaginary ravine is difficult or impossible for many, and some people would rather listen than talk. We understand all of this and that each player has their own strengths and weaknesses.

You'll be given the opportunity to stretch your comfort zone, but we'll never make you do anything that makes you really uncomfortable. It's up to you!

At your first event, you will make a character, learn the basic rules, and jump into the world of Elysia.

What Is Larp?

L.A.R.P. stands for Live Action RolePlay and is a mix of "acting game," "pseudo-contact sport," and "hanging out with friends." People play characters and tell a story together over the course of a day, a weekend, or

sometimes longer. They do puzzles, solve problems together, negotiate treaties, hit each other with foam weapons, and live through an adventure written by volunteers behind the scenes.

If you've seen things like Lord of the Rings, Dungeons & Dragons, or Skyrim, Pro is a very similar setting. Players dress like medieval people and improvise a narrative amongst themselves, facilitated by experienced writers and event directors. It's a fantasy setting, which means spells, mystical powers, undead monsters, and magical creatures.

Players play different roles in the group - sword-and-shield guardians, quiet and timid druids who talk to animals, fire-throwing elementalists, and battlefield commanders who make their friends stronger with their words - and that's just four of twenty roles in the book (and yes, you can mix and match - you can have a shield AND talk to animals!).

The Pre-Game Procedure

Step 0: Packing

The website has a packing list of recommended gear, which won't be covered in its entirety here. There will be some car-loading tetris if you pack a lot - especially if you have more than one person to a car. The most important things to remember are any medications you need and chargers for electronics, particularly if you are navigating home via GPS.

Step 1: Registration

Currently Pro requires you to sign up and prepay online if you want to PC the event ([PCing and NPCing](#), below). If you come without a spot on the list, you may be given the opportunity to NPC, but not necessarily.

Go to the Events page of the Pro website and click on "Register now!" to sign up. It will take you to a Square site to prepay. You'll need a credit or debit card (you can also use a Visa gift card). You can only sign up for the next event on the schedule, and only when registration is open between events.

You'll get the chance to mark PC or NPC, and pay if applicable. If you are NPCing you do not currently have to pay anything, but you can buy extra game advancement points ([XP](#)) if you want. You may not NPC your first event, as you will have to know many more rules as an NPC than as a PC. If you have never played with us before, your first event is free, and there is a place to mark that on the form.

You will get a receipt in your email; we recommend you save or flag that in case something goes wrong on our end.

Note - you will not be able to sign up for any event the week before one is due to run, or when the event itself is happening. Registration usually reopens a few days after the event is over.

Step 1.5 - Returning Players Only (skip this if you're a first-time player)

If you're not a new player, you'll need to email the records manager with your updated build for the event.

You'll take the character you built at the first event, and add on whatever points you WILL get at the next event, because remember: [xp](#) is given at the beginning of the event. You then tally the whole thing up and send it off to prolarpsheets@gmail.com (make sure you include your name and your character's name so we know who you are!). Your newly updated character sheet will be ready at the next event.

Terminology: "What's your build total?"

Your "build" refers to your character's number set, expressed in "xp" and "skills." When you [make a character](#), you now have a "build" for them. This build can be changed when you're just starting out but locks in after a certain amount of time. So don't worry too much about making the perfect character you'll love forever on the first try, you can try new things and change them later.

Step 2: Travel

On the Locations page on the website, there are maps and directions to find the sites we commonly use, as well as tips on finding sites. The roads may be rough, especially early in the season, and people do and have gotten stuck in the mud on occasion. We recommend you know your car's limitations and plan accordingly.

Step 3: Arrival

If you arrive around 5:30-7pm (for Pro - larps will vary wildly in start and end times), you will be able to get your stuff in your cabin before the sun goes down, which is always a plus. We ask that you not show up significantly before then, since we often have things to set up that aren't for [PCs](#) to see yet.

Some units (groups of cabins) may be off-limits depending on the event. Talk to a staff member to locate a cabin that's available for you to use.

Step 4: Check In

Check-in starts around 7pm. You will talk to someone who has a laptop in [Tavern](#), and they will look you up on the list and give you a character sheet - blank if you're new, or printed out if you're a returning player. A [marshal](#) will help you if you have any questions.

Step 5: Opening Ceremonies

We will have a pre-game all-hands meeting, go through basic rules, and talk about anything that needs to be known for this specific event, like background or geographical context.

Step 6: Game On!

No two events are exactly the same after Game On is called, so this is where you have to figure it out on the go.

Necessary Basics

Rules

Every larp has rules - some have a LOT and some have comparatively few. The rulebook found on the Game Rules page at pittsburghroleplaying.com is the latest ruleset for Pro.

The rules are there to give players a framework and a common way of looking at things. Otherwise, anyone could make up anything, and then it's just chaos.

You should have an idea of what the rules of your chosen larp are, although you don't need an encyclopedic knowledge of them to start. Have an idea what *your* character can do ([Characters](#)), and the rules for Death and Dying, and you can always ask other players if you don't know what a word means.

The four major real life rules at our larp are: no drugs or alcohol, the calls for "[Hold](#)" (stop everything you're doing immediately) and "[EMT](#)" (injury on or off the field of play, described in greater detail below), and the Consent to Touch rule.

Drugs are not allowed at Pro. Do not bring drugs, do not do drugs on-site, do not do drugs OFF-site and then come back onto site high. Alcohol is allowed for adults 21+ at ONLY one event, called the Winter Rose (below) (subject to change depending on later evaluation and the venue's policies). At any other event, everything above regarding drugs also applies to alcohol.

If you are ever found to be in possession of or under the influence of illegal or site-banned substances (again including alcohol), you will be asked to leave and not come back. If there are illegal drugs involved, we will call the police. For everyone's safety, please do not do drugs at Pro.

This is stated in Opening Ceremonies, but it bears repeating: if you smoke, and are under 21, do not do it at Pro, or you will be asked to leave. If you smoke and are OVER 21, you must keep it to the designated smoking area (identified at the beginning of the event), and put your cigarette butts in whatever kind of container you want to use (most people use empty pop or water bottles) and dispose of them by the end of the event. If we find cigarette butts on the ground, smoking will no longer be permitted at Pro.

Terminology: "Are you going to the Winter Rose?"

The Winter Rose is the [roleplay](#)-only banquet event that happens in the winter, in the "off-season." The Winter Rose is available to anyone who's been to at least one Pro event in the past - it's mostly just friends seeing friends, so it's not a good first event because there are no mods or NPCs. If you're a new player, check out the full experience later in the year!

Terminology: “Hold!”

The Hold call means there is either a potential danger or injury, or the [mod marshal](#) has to explain something about the situation that you need to know. If you hear “Hold!,” you ALSO yell “Hold!” and stop everything you’re doing. Anyone may call a hold, but try to keep it to out-of-game issues that require immediate attention. A rules question or belief that someone else is doing something wrong is not a valid reason to call a hold, but losing your glasses or tripping and twisting your ankle is.

To be perfectly clear: ANYONE can call a hold at ANY TIME if there’s a problem. You will never be treated differently, made fun of, or retaliated against for calling a hold at your first event or your fiftieth. In the unlikely event that this happens, speak to a player rep immediately and they will put a stop to it. This rule is for every single person on the field.

If someone is injured, an accessibility aid is damaged or lost, or someone is in immediate danger not covered by “caution,” don’t wait for a marshal to see it, just call it out immediately. We would much rather handle a hold that turned out to not be a big deal than have a player lie on the ground with a sprained ankle until the fight is over.

A Hold should not be broken by any player until a marshal or the player who called the hold calls a “Lay On.” This is elaborated on in Opening Ceremonies on the website and will be restated at the event.

Terminology: “Caution!”

“Caution” is “Hold”’s little sibling. If something is about to be a minor danger, like your opponent is about to back into a tree or some other hazard, you can call a quick “caution!” and move the fight over a few feet so no one gets hurt. “Caution” should stop combat for about 10 feet in any direction. If you hear “caution,” it could very well be directed at you, so make sure you look around you if you’re in the radius.

Terminology: “Do you consent to physical roleplay?”

At Pro (though not at every larp), you absolutely, positively must ask before touching another player, unless there is an explicit agreement beforehand that you are allowed to touch your friends. It can be asked either in- or out-of-game. Either way, the player being asked may ask “what are you going to do?” and the other person has to answer honestly. You are absolutely, positively allowed to say “no” in ANY circumstance. If you intentionally break this rule and touch

someone who did not consent, or misrepresent what you are planning to do if you do get permission, you will be asked to leave and not come back.

Roleplaying

Think of larping as a play, where you are acting as a character, and you write what they say and do as you go along. Now imagine a whole room full of people writing their own characters simultaneously, in response to each other's words and actions. You're playing the role of a different person, therefore, this is called "roleplaying."

Roleplaying is the "RP" part of the LARP acronym, and refers to a kind of acting and thinking done as someone other than yourself.

If you've ever done or watched an improv show, or played a tabletop RPG (RolePlaying Game), you're already at least a little bit familiar with this style of interaction.

There's such a thing as text or online roleplaying, which is where the LA comes in to differentiate - "live action," meaning at a larp it's happening in real time with other people.

Costuming

Costuming is one facet of making the game feel real and immersive. Pro is in the medieval fantasy genre, so characters in the world of Elysia dress in kirtles, kilts, cloaks, and other medieval clothing. Do your best to keep up the appearance of being in the correct century and genre, but your costume doesn't need to be perfect before you go check out a larp!

Terminology: "Do you think this looks period?"

"Period" is an adjective, short for "in-period" and refers to the apparent time period of your stuff. If it's a "period" shirt, it's the correct look for the genre. If someone says something is period, it's medieval or medieval enough.

Building a great costume can be pretty cheap - thrift stores and craft stores are excellent for this. Don't worry about sewing the whole thing from scratch if you don't feel like it. Shirts that button halfway down from the neck, regular cloth pants with cord wrapped around them from the knee

down, and all kinds of skirts and dresses work just fine. Wrapping and tying a big triangle of plain cloth from a fabric store around your waist is a very simple way to cover up pants that maybe aren't the most period - sometimes it's just that simple! If you look up "medieval costume" or "medieval garb" on Google, you'll find some good ideas. (The secret is layering!)

If you want to buy the whole thing right off, Etsy (higher quality on average but more expensive) and Amazon (lower quality, cheaper) both have medieval costuming, as well as places like Medieval Collectibles and Calimacil. We do not recommend using these sites for weapons, they're very tough foam and no one really wants to be hit with one.

If you'd rather make it, Pinterest is a great place for patterns and guides, if you're okay with inevitably going down some interesting rabbit holes for a few hours. Fabric stores often have physical patterns that are medieval-ish, explicitly for costumes, or can be adapted slightly to look more period.

Weapons

Almost every character at any larp has some kind of weapon. A post-apocalyptic larp will typically have Nerf or airsoft guns, which are not appropriate for our setting. We also do not allow "larp bows" that shoot arrows with foam tips - those tips tend to break off and then you are shooting a real live arrow at another human being. We can't reinspect every arrow every time it's shot to see if the tips are still functional. So, you'll be using the same packets ([Packets](#), below) used for spells.

Pro uses both "boffer" (usually PVC pipe covered in thicker foam) and "plastidip" (EVA foam with a thinner core, more realistic in appearance) weapons. Plastidip are more labor-intensive and difficult to make, not to mention a little rough to get hit with; boffers are easier to make but don't look as good (softer hit though). It's a trade-off, we probably have about 50/50 in weapon types. If you're new, boffers are the way to start out, if you don't want to buy it pre-made.

Characters

PC/NPC

At a larp event, you are either a “PC” (player character) or “NPC” (non-player character).

A PC is the personal character you play, and you make all the decisions related to them. They are your vehicle to play with the narrative designed by the writers ([Plot](#)). When you’re playing a PC you will be the same character the entire weekend.

An NPC, by contrast, is a character created to tell the story of the event. The event director will tell you what kind of character you are, and you go out and play it for the PCs. NPCs can be roleplay- or combat-only, depending on what is needed for the story. NPCs play many kinds of people and creatures over the course of the event, they might be a zombie in the morning and a guard captain in the evening.

We take turns playing PC and NPC. You’ll play a PC for some weekends, and an NPC for others. Some people prefer one or the other, but everyone does their part to make the game work! Many games, including Pro, prefer something called the “2:1 ratio.”

Terminology: “I have a 1:1 ratio this year, i’m gonna NPC a lot!”

When you hear “ratio” at a larp, it usually refers to how much you pc/npc. A 2:1 ratio means spending one event as an NPC for every two you spend as a PC. This tends to be the preferred number for larps to work, although some will vary by need.

NPCing also grants several bonuses, like more xp, [Power Point Resets](#), Pro Points (spent on many things in game, like special “attunement” and “association” powers - but you don’t have to decide about that for a while!), and a sense of comradery with your fellow players.

Some games require PCs to do a “shift” of NPCing per event, though Pro currently does not. You are either a PC or an NPC for the entire weekend.

Building a Character

At your first event, you'll make your own PC. There will be people there to help you with the math and rules for character building. You'll put a certain number of points (at Pro, these are called experience points or "xp," but some larps call them build points/"bp" or similar) into the things your character can do, like spells and skills. Each spell or skill will cost a different number of experience points, and before you know it, you'll have a list of things you can do in combat or roleplay, and that list is totally unique to you.

Your character sheet is only a part of your overall character, but it's an important part. You never have to show your sheet to another player unless that player is a [marshal](#) (official rules referee), including a mod marshal (an NPC assigned to run a mod), or [site manager](#) (to sign off on your [cleanup](#)).

Races and Professions (or Classes)

Creating your character involves picking a race for you to build on. Your race is a humanoid fantasy species, like an elf or a dwarf. Your race will almost always inform your roleplay - whether you're stereotypical or break the mold of your birth culture.

The next step in making a PC is to pick a "profession" (or "class," "school," etc). You'll need one of these to gain access to most abilities. Every profession is different, and each has its own unique "flavor" and skills. Some professions are magical and some are martial.

Terminology: "I'm a Human Healer - what's your profession?"

In most rpgs, there is such thing as a Class, which determines what your character does in the game. You pick this before almost anything else, and it has a list of powers and skills you can use. If you're asked what you are, people are usually asking your race/class combination - "Dwarf Healer," "Human Thief," etc. You don't have to tell them, although your use of abilities will typically give you away eventually.

You can be a subtle Specialist, a brash Fighter, a compassionate Naturalist, a brilliant Arcanist. Or a bold Arcanist, a clever Naturalist, a genius Fighter, or a benevolent Specialist! Your independent choices for how your character sees and interacts with the world are what make you unique.

Don't be afraid to buck the trends and do something unexpected - just make sure it's within the bounds of the rules.

Abilities

You can do things in the game that you can't (or shouldn't) do in real life. You can throw fire, or stab someone in the back, or mystically heal wounds. Those powers are governed by the rules, and the larp rulebook will cover what each ability does.

A game skill will almost always require you to say something ([Incants](#)) and then perform an action specified in the description of the skill.

Usually, even though you're using a game skill, you have to have some kind of real-life ability to approximate doing the thing, since it is a *live action* game. So, if you're throwing a fireball, you have to throw a "spell packet" at the person you're trying to hit, and a fighter is a lot better when she can hit the enemy.

Terminology: "Do you have any packets?"

A "packet" is a little shuttlecock-type-thing made of cloth and biodegradable airsoft pellets (NOT metal or birdseed). It flies through the air pretty well at fairly short distances, and represents anything being "thrown" or cast at another person. This can be negative, like damage and status effects, or positive, like healing or shields.

In-game, spell packets are sometimes called "aura." Packets are also used as arrows, poisons, acid flasks, energy bolts from a staff... make sure you check to see if your chosen class has "packet-delivered" abilities, and consider bringing some of your own to the event. There is a packet-making guide video currently on the Pro website.

You don't always have to throw a packet; if you're casting on a willing target, you can "touch cast" by holding the packet close to them or touching them with it (without touching them yourself). If you have permission for [physical roleplay](#), you can even just touch them and do the spell that way. You can always touch cast on yourself without a packet.

Skills like “Lockpick” and “Pickpocket” require specific real-life skill that cannot be circumvented. Just because you bought the “Lockpick” skill doesn’t mean you can actually pick the lock (which will always be a genuine padlock you have to crack).

Larp Life

In- and Out-of-Game

You’ll probably hear the phrases “in-game” and “out-of-game” at events.

In-game means within the world of the larp. When you speak in-game, you aren’t speaking as the player, you’re speaking as your character, a person who lives in a medieval world of magic and dragons.

Out-of-game means in the real world. We try to stay in-game as much as possible, but sometimes you have a real-life issue or question. Try to ask or address it as quietly as possible, around as few people as possible, so as not to break people’s mindset.

Some calls (“[Hold](#),” “[Caution](#),” “[EMT](#),” etc - these are also covered in the Opening Ceremonies section of the site) are fully out-of-game and should not be responded to by your character but rather by the player.

Plot

Most larps (though not all) have some sort of plot throughout the course of the event. There’s usually an event director, writers, and NPCs playing out a planned story, and the characters interact with it and make decisions that could change the course of the whole event.

If you have an idea for a plot or mod (Mods, below), talk to a staff member before or after an event, and they may be able to work your idea into an event. Keep in mind that they hear a lot from a lot of players and may not be able to work with you right away.

Mods

There are usually not enough NPCs at a Pro event (though bigger larps may vary) to have wandering monsters, so we uncover the story by going on modules or “mods.” Mods are usually “hooked” by NPCs, who go into town/tavern ([Tavern](#)) and offer a story hook to the PCs. The PCs get directions to where the mod will take place, and they hike out there to see what’s going on. Mods usually involve meeting up with NPCs and advancing a plot, sometimes involving combat and sometimes only talking to them.

Terminology: “Are you hooking that one?”

Hooking is sending out an NPC to sell the PCs on a quest. Also known as a “story hook,” meant to get the characters interested and informed about what’s going on in the story.

Hooks can be one-time things or can be involved in a whole “mod chain” (a self-contained storyline that involves multiple locations and usually more than one NPC). They are often the ones who give rewards at the end of the mod, so if you had a specific costume piece for the hook you played as an NPC, remember not to lose it right after you come back to [shack!](#)

If you’re not clear on where you’re going or what you’re supposed to do when you get there, ask for clarification, as a PC OR as an NPC. You don’t want to end up across the site from where the NPCs are waiting, or get there and not know how to finish the mod, or realize you don’t know what kind of monster you’re supposed to be.

Combat

Conflict is a part of life and it’s DEFINITELY part of larp. You can avoid combat, but most people enjoy hitting a skeleton or a goblin every once in a while. The most important thing to remember about fighting at Pro is that your intent is not to hurt another player, EVER. We’re what’s called a “lightest touch” larp, which means you just need to hit your opponent hard enough that they notice it.

Head shots with weapons are very illegal by the rules, and you could have a weapon confiscated, or be banned from the game if you hit illegal areas

consistently or in a way that's clearly not accidental (we know accidents happen).

Terminology: "Check your swings, that was a rough hit."

You will sometimes hear the phrase "check your swings," which just means you're hitting a little hard. Remember you're tapping and not "baseball swinging."

Equipment

Every player has their own idea of what constitutes "necessary equipment." Certain things HAVE to be on your person at all times, like your character sheet (unless you're [Sleeping Offsite](#)), any magic item representations ([Physical Representations](#)), and racial markers if you're playing a non-human character, like pointed ears for an elf or a beard for a dwarf.

Some players also carry things like rope, matches, non-fire lanterns/LED candles, and notebooks - the list is almost endless. A bag, pouch, or backpack is generally a good idea if you plan on carrying a lot.

Lore

Almost every larp, except a rare brand new one, has a history. Most experienced players will be over the moon to tell you glorious tales of past years, and you'll score a lot of points if you just sit and listen - and you might even learn something useful!

As you play regularly, you will gain more understanding of the history of the world, and get some glorious tales of your own. Don't worry if you don't feel fully caught up for your first few events - it's always a little confusing to jump right into the middle of a story.

If you have a lore question, you can ask fellow players, but the people most likely to know will be staff players or people with noble titles. Try to keep your questions in-world ([In- and Out-of-Game](#)), immersion is an important aspect of the game!

Terminology: "Are you Elysian nobility?"

Nobility are a more immediate authority than the Justicars (below), but they are still within the bounds of the law. They do their best to uphold the honor and

virtues of their land. Most nobles are assigned to a specific barony, but their title holds weight in all of Elysia.

Some nobles are more amenable to conversation than others, but if you have a question, one of them probably knows the answer, since nobility usually comes with a long history with the game. You'll be able to feel out people's personalities as you play.

If a noble does something you're not comfortable with on an out-of-game level, let a player rep or marshal know. You NEVER have to do anything that makes you uncomfortable, no matter who asks you to.

If a noble does something you're not comfortable with on an IN-game level, you can talk to the Justicars by going to [NPC Shack](#) and asking to speak with them. Only do this if the noble has clearly broken a law or done something blatantly outside the bounds of their authority - ask another noble or a more experienced player if you're not sure.

To become a noble, you have to be squired to another noble for at least a year (usually longer - 2+ years is not uncommon at all), and you are eventually elevated to knight or similar.

Terminology: "I'm going to go to the Justicars."

Justicars are the rule of law in Elysia. If you see something illegal, you can go to them, and they will (usually as an actual NPC) come in and investigate. Keep in mind the person reported will probably at least attempt to figure out who turned them in, so be prepared to take a social hit and be considered untrustworthy, or be questioned by the person you accused, if you overuse this!

Justicars are not an out-of-game authority - if you ask for them, it will be assumed that the report is completely in-game. If you're reporting cheating or something that made you uncomfortable in real life ([Reporting Misconduct](#), below), always talk to a marshal or a player rep right away, and also report it if you feel you have faced negative consequences (in- or out-of-game) for an out-of-game complaint or concern, which should NEVER happen.

Terminology: "His graphic t-shirt really breaks immersion for me."

"Immersion" is something you'll hear every once in a while - this refers to the feeling that the game is accurate to the setting. Things like having your phone out regularly, or wearing clothing with text on it, are called "breaking immersion." It's considered a faux pas to bring too much of the modern world to larp.

This doesn't mean you have to use wooden forks or cook a stew for dinner, a lot of things are unavoidably modern and we live with them. Food and water are never considered an issue when it comes to immersion, nor are medical needs like inhalers, eyeglasses, hearing aids, or medication. But we expect at least an attempt to be made in terms of gear, costume, and discussion (try to avoid out-of-game conversations).

The saying in a popular reenactment group is "The Society ends at the ankle." Wear shoes that are good for your feet. If they look medieval, great! If not, as long as you can walk in them for long periods of time, they're fine. A functional shoe you can play in all day is better than a beautiful shoe that lands you in [tavern](#) for the whole event with a foot injury.

Incants and Miscants

An "incant" ("cant") or "call" is what indicates that you're using a power in the game. The structure of the call varies by game, but there will always be a very specific set of words to say, both to tell people what's going on and often to add flavor to the game.

A "miscant" is when you have said those words wrong. At Pro, there's a way to get the skill back (see the rulebook), although there will not be that option at every larp. Miscants happen to everyone, and an NPC may or may not take the effect if they know what you meant.

Skill Reset

Game skills are usable a certain number of times within the course of a day. At Pro, skills reset every six hours - 6am, 12pm, 6pm, and 12am. Every time that exact minute passes on the clock, you get all your abilities back.

Before that happens, you are stuck with what you have, unless you use a Power Point Reset, which is earned by NPCing and will give you the benefits of a skill reset. This can be used in between mods, when you're low on skills and need a boost. To use a PPR, ask a marshal to sign off on your sheet. You can only use one per 6 hour period, so try to time it so you're completely or almost completely out of skills when you use it, to get maximum use.

Terminology: “Re-up! It’s noon!”

The colloquial term for the changing of the clock from 11:59 to 12:00, or 5:59 to 6:00, is “re-up,” meaning all your skills are ready to use again. When you hear that call, remember whatever skills you use after that time are gone until the next six.

Sometimes you’ll hear “10 minutes to re-up!” which usually means use any skills you can before they flip. Crafters usually make most of their items immediately after re-up, so they’ll have them as soon as possible, but most classes have to ration them over the course of the day.

It’s good practice to know what you need to do directly before and after the time flip, for instance, if you have extra healing left over that you don’t need before the time change, you could ask around for anyone who needs healing, because health DOESN’T go back up to full between periods. Some “buffs” (beneficial effects) have to be reapplied between sixes as well.

Metagaming

When you larp, you the player are playing a game. But in the context of the larp, you’re acting as a character who is NOT playing a game. Playing as though you’re in a game, or bringing out of character knowledge into game, is called “metagaming.”

Example 1: “Well, I know this event director and what kinds of plots they like to run, so I’m going to predict what’s going to happen based on my knowledge of THEM.” Your character doesn’t know that there’s an event director, and playing as though they do is metagaming.

Example 2: You see a certain number of out-of-game NPCs go into a building. You say “well, I’m betting there’s about 5 enemies in there.” Your character doesn’t know how many people are in there, so you shouldn’t bring that into game (follow this as best you can).

Example 3: If someone tells you something out of character, or you see someone’s character sheet by accident and see something they haven’t told anyone, try not to bring that into game. On the flip side, don’t tell people out-of-game anything you don’t want their characters to know, and it will make life easier for everyone to keep track of what they know both in and out of game.

Terminology: "Player knowledge is character knowledge."

This is typically a joke meaning many people will, sometimes even just subconsciously, bring out of game knowledge into their characters, or find a way to "suspect" or "discover" a secret in-game. Make an attempt to keep out-of-game knowledge out of game, but understand that it's a common thing that happens and keep your secrets safe!

Page Status

Not everyone can participate in combat. There's a rule for that!

If you are a Page (represented by a green headband), you will stay in the tavern area and not go on mods (due to the risk of combat). You will not be hit by weapons or packets from ANYONE. We recommend you build a character that utilizes a crafting system, so you can send your creations along with other players (for a price, if you'd like to make some in-game money!).

Real Life

Camping

Camping is an optional but fun part of larping. Some events include camping and some don't - a one-day event is by definition a day trip, but multiple-day events will involve sleeping bags and cabins! The Pro website has a useful packing list if you're not used to spending time outdoors. Some players sleep in their cars as well, especially if they're squeamish about bugs.

Tents are part of many larps, although our usual campsite does not permit tent camping at group campsites. The key things to remember are bedding and food. And socks. Lots of socks.

Hygiene is a little trickier at a campsite than at home - remember your deodorant and toothbrush for the good of all around you. The Pro overnight site has several working showers if you're so inclined, and flush toilets and running sinks. If a shower is too much for you to worry about (many players

go without - it's up to you), bringing a pack of wipes can help a lot with that "baked-on sweat" feeling. You will sweat a LOT at larp, as with almost any sport.

On a related note, while most players wear the same basic costume for the whole weekend, they typically switch out the base layer with fresh stuff every day - whatever you're wearing underneath your costume pieces, like underwear, shorts, bras, and undershirts.

We recommend you have backups for items you can't live without in case something is torn or ruined, especially things like pants and shoes. It is VERY difficult to larp barefoot and we have definitely seen people buy shoes online only to have them fall apart in the first day or so. Bring shoes you can trust, even just as backups, and don't worry if they're not [period](#). The important thing is that you can walk in them for a while.

Food and Drink

Pro doesn't provide food at events. Sometimes players will offer to make food for everyone, but it's a good idea to bring some for yourself anyway - sometimes players can't make it and then you'll be out of food for the weekend!

Raccoon Creek State Park group camps (where we usually camp on 2- and 3-days) have fridges, freezers, stoves, and ovens. They are used frequently by multiple players, and you may end up having to wait in line to use a stove, especially at mealtimes.

Consumables suggestions:

-Water. Not gatorade, not pop, not energy drinks. Those are good as a supplement but you should and will almost certainly WANT TO drink massive amounts of water. Gatorade is basically soda with a sports theme, which is great for sometimes, but water is vital.

-Stuff that can be eaten cold or that doesn't require a ton of prep - lunchmeat, pbj, fruit, cereal (milk optional). You're going to be tired, particularly at night. You don't necessarily want to have to heat up the stove or the oven before you get food. Some people bring sandwiches or hoagies, or even just eat cold pizza.

-You can cook over a fire, in a designated fire ring. However, you MUST watch it the ENTIRE time. Your fire should be very cool before you leave it (also stated on the Opening Ceremonies page of the website).

-Chips and junk food are popular as well. They're quick calories you don't have to prepare, think about, or sit down too long to eat.

Ultimately, you should bring what you're going to eat. If you want to live on salads, or steak, or fresh-baked pies, you can definitely try that. But you'll probably want easy stuff with protein/carbs at some point throughout the weekend.

Sleeping Offsite

Some people enjoy camping. Some do not. If you don't, you can drive home at night or stay at a hotel. If you sleep off-site, you MUST leave your character sheet on-site, hidden or with someone else. If your character sheet is found by an NPC, or if the person holding your sheet is killed in the night, you will also take a death. You are considered "Fate of Party."

Terminology: "Yeah, i was Fate of Party last night."

"Fate of Party" refers to a situation where your character sheet is left with another player and something happens to "you" when you're not there in real life. This may include "dying" and it is considered a valid death even if you personally couldn't do anything to stop it. This is not common, but has happened and will probably happen again.

Medical Sleep

Medical Sleep is like sleeping offsite, on-site. There will occasionally be roving bands of bad guys in the middle of the night, and while that can add a level of excitement to the game, not everyone can run on 4 hours of sleep. We understand this and have a mechanic for those people.

You just tell the event director about it and which cabin you're staying in (you are not required to disclose your reasons or justify why you need this - we only have to know THAT you need it), and then put a big "M" in duct tape on your cabin door to indicate to NPCs that you are not participating in night raids. You then hand your character sheet to another person, or hide

it somewhere on-site, just like sleeping off-site. You will also be “Fate of Party.”

We have staff who do this every event, it is not considered “cheating” and it will always be an available option for anyone.

Risks and Safety

Every sport comes with risks, and larp is no different. While injuries are rare and almost always minor, they happen every once in a while. We have trained, card-carrying EMT players who will render assistance to anyone who needs it, and there is a hospital roughly a 20 minute drive from the overnight campsite.

Our staff all have the utmost concern for player safety and will take every precaution to make sure no one is injured or put in any danger. If you feel there’s a danger that’s not being addressed, please talk to a member of staff.

Some risks to keep in mind:

- Wet stairs. Stairs can get very slippery if it rained recently. Just watch your step and when in doubt, go slowly. If there has been rain at the event, marshals may rule that no one is allowed to be in combat on or near steps.
- Running on wet ground, mud, sand (there are volleyball courts at both major sites used by pro), or gravel.
- Wildlife. Just don’t bother them and the odds are good they won’t bother you. Tell a site manager if there is an animal in a cabin or public area. Do not approach wildlife of any kind.
- Bugs. We highly recommend using your chosen form of bug spray, and consider also using a separate tick spray as well. Ticks are VERY common in Western PA, so check yourself after every event. They can look like tiny dots surrounded by red, or they can be bigger and easier to spot.

Reporting Misconduct

As mentioned several times in this guide, if you are ever uncomfortable or feel you’ve been targeted or harmed on an out-of-game level, please go to a player rep or a marshal, ideally before the end of the event.

We can deal with the situation much more effectively in the moment. That doesn't mean you can't make a report after an event, but it will be substantially easier to handle if the incident is still fresh in everyone's minds. It means we can tell people to stop what they're doing immediately to avoid more incidents, involving you or any other player.

Player safety is our number one concern, always. We never ever want a player to feel unsafe at a game or in our online spaces. If something is negatively affecting your experience with the game, let us know. Player reps and marshals will raise their hands at every opening ceremony and their photos are all on the website's Opening Ceremonies page.

On the flip side of that, please don't be a jerk at larp. Don't harass or bully people, don't insult or instigate fights with other players on an out-of-game level, don't touch people without permission, don't make suggestive comments if you have been asked to stop by the subject or recipient of those comments.

Rule of thumb: if you're asked to stop doing something, stop doing it.

Strong language is used frequently at many larps, including Pro, and may involve innuendo, but do not speak to or about people in a way that makes them uncomfortable. If anyone EVER makes an inappropriate comment about a minor player, please let staff know immediately.

Honor System

No one will be monitoring your every move to make sure you're using your skills the way you should be, so it's up to you to make sure you're playing the game correctly. If you do something egregiously outside the rules, or consistently use way too many skills for your xp level, you may be asked to be careful, or in extreme cases asked to leave.

The Box

At the end of an event spent PCing, you will put your character sheet into the box. The box will be identified at the beginning of the weekend, and it's very important that you put your character sheet in there, because it's the only way the staff will know what changed for your character over the course of the event - deaths, money, earned or spent potions, etc.

If you are [Bitter Ending](#), you STILL put your sheet in the box on Saturday night (or Sunday if it's a 3-day), because it goes home at the end of the event. Your Bitter End reward will be tracked by the site manager and does not require a sheet sign-off.

Tagging Out

Some plots and roleplay moments aren't for everyone. If you're not comfortable or need a break to collect yourself, you can always use the "safeword" - crossing your first two fingers and putting them across your chest. This indicates that you have to leave the scene. No one will ever give you trouble for doing this unless it's used repeatedly to duck in-game consequences.

When you tag out, you just put up the sign and walk away. Try not to disrupt the scene taking place, as some players thrive on fictional conflict and are probably enjoying themselves. Once you leave, you're out for a little while - you can't come back onto the mod or encounter.

We strongly recommend that you tell someone where you're going if you leave, try to make it someone outside the immediate encounter but make sure someone knows where you are. If someone just disappears to a cabin or their car, and no one knows about it, it's a big concern.

You will likely be approached by a player rep afterwards, to make sure you're ok. You are free to speak with them or not, as you're feeling at the time.

If you have a specific rep you want to speak with, for any reason, tell anyone on staff and they'll track them down. Keep in mind there may be some time involved in finding them, if they're on the other end of the site, especially because there is no cell service for many people where we currently play. You can wait in [tavern](#), your cabin, or wherever else you'd like to be, but if you go back to your cabin just make sure someone knows where you're staying!

Medication

If you have prescription meds on-site, especially controlled substances, we ask that you let the GM know about them, as the current GM is also a medical professional and the lead EMT and may need to know for emergency reasons. No one else will be told what medication you are taking unless there's an immediate medical necessity.

Logistics

Lots of things happen behind the scenes at a larp event. Costume changes, last-minute rewrites, prop-building, prop-fixing, and that's just what happens on the weekend itself - much more is done in-between events.

Setup is done by whatever NPCs can get there early - unless specifically requested, which is rare, you are not required to help with setup if you're NPCing and not permitted to help if you're PCing - no spoilers!

Cleanup is considered a big deal by Pro and every PC is required to do a half hour (depending on the site manager's needs) of cleanup per event unless they are [Bitter Ending](#). We are considered very clean campers by the site, and we want to make sure it stays that way. NPCs have their own cleanup, which is packing up [NPC Shack](#) at the end of the event. See the [Site Manager](#) if you are NPCing and can't stay until the end; you'll probably be asked to do a minor cleanup of Shack.

Raccoon Creek State Park, where we usually camp, sends up a ranger after every event to walk the grounds and make sure no one messed up the site. It's very important to clean up after ourselves and not leave trash

everywhere or do anything to damage the forest around us, because we are guests at their campsite, and polite guests get invited back!

Physical Representations (“PhysReps”)

Most things in larp are physically represented in some way. Whether it’s a foam covered pipe representing a sword or paper mache that indicates your character has horns, we use what we have to create a fantastical world.

Phys Reps don’t always bear a perfect resemblance to what they represent, so a question you will often hear is “what do i see?” - this is the player’s way of asking what their character sees. The player might be seeing a small woman with fake tusks, but the character is seeing the massive troll she represents. The NPC should always know what they are in-game and should tell you if you ask.

Terminology: “You see what you see.”

Sometimes the NPC will respond to “what do I see?” with “you see what you see.” That means they’re confident that their representation is fairly accurate to the image they’re trying to convey - a human bandit is pretty easy to represent accurately, for instance.

NPC Shack and Tavern

At most larp events, there will be two “home bases” - one each for the PCs and NPCs. At Pro, NPCs have NPC Shack, and PCs have Tavern.

NPC Shack is a big cabin, usually toward the middle of the campsite, and that’s where the event director runs the event. NPCs go back to Shack in between mods, usually have lunch there (unless they’re playing characters over lunch, which is optional), and some sleep there as well. This cabin is off-limits to PCs while game is on.

Tavern is the large dining hall in the middle of the site, and it’s where the PCs usually hang out and socialize between mods. If you’re looking for a PC, they’re probably at tavern!

Night Mods

We usually only have 1 ½ (or 2 ½ occasionally) days to play our game. So do we go to bed on Friday, or play late into the night? Depends on the person - some people go to sleep very early on the first night, but the game is usually run until 2-3am or later.

If you are not able to go on mods at night, please feel free to skip them. Your safety and the safety of the people around you is paramount, and if your night vision or coordination in darkness are such that you would be in danger or put others in danger (with wild weapon swings, tripping over people or tree roots more than can be reasonably expected, etc), we ask that you not participate in night mods.

That being said, most players DO play night mods, and there will be the occasional accident - usually not causing significant injury. Expect elbows in the side and a stepped-on toe every once in a while.

Hazard Marking

Hazards (typically anything below eye level that could be tripped over in the middle of the night) will be marked with glow sticks. If you see a glow stick in the area, make sure you avoid the spot, or risk falling into a mud puddle or a rabbit hole.

As noted in “Site Manager” below, if you see a hazard that’s not marked, tell a site manager - ideally before the sun goes down!

Bitter End

This is the term for cleaning up the day AFTER the event. Some people stay til the next morning, and the site manager gives them assignments for making sure the site is cleared of all packets, glowsticks, and miscellaneous things left behind from mods. You will get Pro Points for this - the number you get depends on how many people are assisting in cleanup.

If you are Bitter Ending and do not do a cleanup during the event, you MUST stay for Bitter End, or you will not get xp for the event. If you're not sure whether or not you'll be able to stay, it's a good idea to err on the side of doing a cleanup during the event.

Online Spaces

Our larp is primarily on facebook, as far as social media goes. There may be private discord servers amongst players, but the official Pro discord is not regularly active.

We typically post setup pieces on the facebook groups (there is one for in-game discussion and one for out-of-game use). There are also conversations between players or characters, announcements, dates, and registration links. Watching them isn't required but offers a fuller and more convenient experience of the game.

If you're making a facebook account just to join the groups, please message the page (Pittsburgh Roleplaying Organization) before you request to join, because a brand-new account with no friends is a red flag online.

There are several rules displayed on the facebook group, and we expect them to be followed. They're the usual: no ads without prior authorization by messaging the page or at least an admin/mod, no hate speech, no explicit content, don't make the algorithm mad by using "violent" terms like "killing blow," and don't tag people without permission.

People are great about these; the groups are genuinely very welcoming and helpful. We're very proud of them!

Staff Roles

Site Manager

The site manager is the staff member you will DEFINITELY interact with over the course of PCing an event. They give you your cleanup assignment

([Logistics](#)), which is a very important part of our game. The site manager will sign off on your sheet once you're done with cleanup - you have to have your sheet signed when it goes into [The Box](#) to return to Pro next time, so make sure you find them again after you do your cleanup.

Talk to the site manager if:

- You see a hazard that's not marked by glow sticks (Hazard Marking, above). We don't want people tripping in the middle of the night!
- You find an animal or insect/spider nest in your cabin. Bugs are a normal part of camping and you WILL be sharing your cabin with them, but no one expects you to sleep in a cabin with a wasp nest inside, or a bird, bat, chipmunk, etc. The site manager will likely not opt to fight wildlife, so you will probably just be moved to a new cabin.
- There is a lack of bathroom supplies in the bathroom. It is absolutely essential that every bathroom have toilet paper, a garbage bag, and soap, and if the bathroom you're using doesn't have those, save the next person some trouble and tell the site manager right away!
- You see a site-related issue that's not covered above, like a burnt-out lightbulb, no hot water in the showers, or a broken set of stairs.

Site managers are there to help with all of that, so let them know if there's any kind of problem in that vein.

GM (General Manager)

The GM is the out-of-game emperor of the larp. Their word is final. They have total power to change or enforce rules at any time (although permanent rules changes will usually happen outside of events and if they occur in the middle of the year, which is rare, they will be announced on the facebook group and at Opening Ceremonies).

Marshal

On the field of play, marshals are the referees. In the moment, whatever a marshal says goes, until you're all out of the in-game situation and can check the book if you disagree with a ruling.

A mod marshal is a type of temporary marshal, who knows the special rules of a particular mod and will tell you how to play it and what you need to know. They may or may not be a full marshal but should be treated as the marshal-of-the-moment. If there's a conflict between a staff marshal and a mod marshal, the staff marshal will take priority on normal game rules. There are exceptions if there is a specific relevant non-standard effect on the mod.

Player Representative

Player reps are there to ensure you're having a good time! Talk to a player rep with any questions, complaints, or concerns.

If you [tag out](#) of a scene, a player rep will probably come and find you later. You don't have to talk to them, but talking through an issue can help you come to a resolution that works for you.

Head of Plot

The Head of Plot is in charge of making sure the game is consistent and the information all matches up. Their job is very complicated, but they have the freedom to write pretty much anything, as long as it fits with the world and doesn't directly interact with their own PC's storyline (event directors frequently write each other's plot so no one is writing their own story).

Photographer

There will sometimes be a photographer at Pro (this is common at larps - people want photos of themselves doing cool stuff). Talk to them to auto-pass all photos of you, or ensure they send you all photos of you for approval, or make requests (either not to post photos of you at certain angles, or to make sure they DO take photos of you and your friends doing something fun).

If you cannot be photographed for work/safety/legal/etc reasons, please talk to the photographer at your first event or as soon as possible. You can ask that they delete all images of you, or that the camera not even be out around you.

EMT

EMT is a vital job at larp - they're there to keep everyone safe. Go to an EMT immediately if you or someone else is injured, or use the call "EMT" if the person can't be moved (always err on the side of not moving them if possible).

When the EMT call is sounded, everyone drops to a knee (or do as they are physically capable to lower themselves), except for the person standing next to the injured person, usually waving and yelling for the medic.

The call is ALWAYS "EMT" - not "healer" or "medic," etc, which can be in-game calls. "EMT" will always be out-of-game. This is explained on the Opening Ceremonies page on the website, and also before every event.

In Conclusion

One last thing, as always: WELCOME TO PRO! We're so happy to see you. This game is first and foremost about having FUN, and we want to do everything possible to make sure you have a good time!