

**GURPS**<sup>®</sup>

Fourth Edition

# **POWER-UPS<sup>™</sup> 8**

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# **LIMITATIONS**



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*You've got to know your limitations. I don't know what your limitations are. I found out what mine were when I was twelve. I found out that there weren't too many limitations, if I did it my way.*

*– Johnny Cash*

# INTRODUCTION

“Wait, you’re saying limitations . . . are *power-ups*?”

Absolutely! Most players would agree that they never seem to have enough character points to build the awesome protagonists of their dreams. So many advantages cry out to be purchased, yet point budgets can be spread only so thin. How can a gamer cut those costs? Limitations.

Chosen well, a limitation isn’t just a point savings; it’s also a way to add depth and color to your character. It can raise questions that are *fun* to answer! If your Legal Enforcement Powers are Informal (p. 15), what line would you have to cross to get them taken away? Why do the police trust an outsider so much? Who loves you at the precinct . . . and who hates your guts? How did you even prove yourself to begin with?

**GURPS Power-Ups 8: Limitations** is here to help raise those questions, flesh out your adventurer, and save you some points while doing so. It collects all of the new general limitations released since **GURPS** entered its Fourth Edition in 2004. Just as important are the new advice and tips; uses of limitations that you might not have thought of; and point-saving tricks that, while not *technically* limitations, work in much the same way. Finally, all the limitations from the **GURPS Basic Set** and this work are summarized in a convenient table.

Sometimes the best way to power up is to find a fun and creative way to power down. Let **Limitations** show you how!

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

**GURPS Power-Ups 8: Limitations** is a new supplement, but as of mid-2014, it includes every general limitation introduced after the **GURPS Basic Set**. Specifically, it draws upon

concepts and limitations from **GURPS Bio-Tech**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level**, **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 9: Summoners**, **GURPS Fantasy**, **GURPS Horror**, **GURPS Martial Arts: Yrth Fighting Styles**, **GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys**, **GURPS Powers**, **GURPS Psionic Powers**, **GURPS Social Engineering**, **GURPS Supers**, **GURPS Thaumatology**, **GURPS Thaumatology: Chinese Elemental Powers**, and **GURPS Zombies**.

*Out of limitations comes  
creativity.*

– Debbie Allen

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As the Subgenius Reverend Pee Kitty, Jason Levine has overcome the limitations of reality to become the Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor. His RPG-fu has served him well in the creation of the **GURPS Monster Hunters** series; his “psychic trilogy” of **GURPS Psionic Powers**, **GURPS Psionic Campaigns**, and **GURPS Psis**; the popular **GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic**; and many other books. His influence also extends to *Pyramid* magazine, in the form of editorial assistance and regular articles. He lives on the Georgia/Tennessee state line with his wife (who has the Cosmic enhancement rather than any limitations) and family.

## About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Resources include:

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*Bibliographies.* Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

# CHAPTER ONE

# LIMITATIONS WITHOUT LIMITS

Limitations provide an infinite number of ways for the players and GM alike to customize **GURPS** traits. They often require GM adjudication, to answer questions ranging from fair value to whether a given combination is even legal. And

some ways to save points aren't even "normal" limitations at all! The advice in this chapter should help when navigating such tricky waters.

## TRICKS AND TIPS

Not everything about limitations is cut and dried. Even the most experienced gamer can benefit from a bit of advice and some new ways to use these modifiers.



### ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility (p. B110) is a catchall limitation – a means to restrict your ability in a way that other limitations don't cover. As such, it asks more of the GM than any other limitation; he must decide whether a proposed Accessibility is a valid limitation and then assign a fair value. It's as much art as science, and that fair value can even vary from one campaign to the next – "Accessibility, Only while underground" might be worth -30% in

most games, but in a fantasy campaign set beneath the Dwarven Mountains, the GM would be generous to call it -5%!

Use the following examples as guidelines and benchmarks when adjudicating the value of new Accessibilities. However, be sure to read the introduction to Chapter 2 (p. 10) first, as the advice there is highly applicable to Accessibility. In particular, be wary of Accessibilities that limit acceptable targets to those on which the advantage would already be used; e.g., if the campaign setting specifies that only women develop psychic powers, then Neutralize (Accessibility, Only on women) is not a valid combination. Likewise, Fatigue Attack (Accessibility, Not on machines) would be free points, as machines have no FP!

### Percentage-Based

If an ability works only in a situation that occurs an easily calculated percentage of the time (e.g., "Only on a Sunday" is 14% of the time) or on a percentage of the population (e.g., "Only on women" is about 50% of the populace), find the limitation on this table.

<i>Percentage of Time the Ability Works</i>	<i>Limitation Value</i>
94-100%	-0%
82-93%	-5%
69-81%	-10%
57-68%	-15%
44-56%	-20%
32-43%	-25%
19-31%	-30%
7-18%	-35%
1-6%	-40%



These types of Accessibilities *can* go below -40%. At this point, it becomes easier to switch from percentages to frequency – that is, how often a person you come across will be a potential subject.

<i>Frequency of Potential Subjects</i>	<i>Limitation Value</i>
One in 10,000	-50%
One in 1 million	-60%
One in 100 million	-70%
One person	-80%

In-between frequencies use the lower limitation value. The GM must consider the campaign scope when determining the fair value for this Accessibility.

*Example:* In a particular setting, only one person in a million has superpowers. However, the game takes place in New York, where (for whatever reason) about one person in 50,000 has powers. Therefore, “Accessibility, Only on supers” is worth -50% in this campaign.

*Ritual and ceremony in their due times kept the world under the sky and the stars in their courses.*

– Terry Pratchett, *Pyramids*

### Supernaturally Appropriate

When modifying advantages to represent spells, the following limitations are useful. Anyone observing gestures or words will automatically realize that you’re casting a spell if he has *any* familiarity with magic. Someone with actual magical training (even if only theoretical, such as Occultism or Thaumatology) may roll vs. an applicable skill (or IQ) as a free action to identify what the spell will do. This roll is at -4 if you are only speaking or gesturing, or at no penalty if you’re doing both.

*Requires gestures:* Your hands – and to a lesser degree, the rest of your body – must be free to move about. If your arms are restrained in any way, or your lower body is *fully* pinned or clamped in place, you cannot use your ability. -10%.

*Requires magic words:* You must chant at normal conversation levels. You cannot be gagged, and stealth is impossible. -10%.

*Requires material component:* You must have something specific in your hand (or with your hand resting on it, for large things). It needs to be defined with some specificity: “a rock” is too broad, but “an agate” is fine. (Extremely rare needs *may* be worth an extra -5%, if the GM is feeling generous.) Unlike Trigger (p. B115), the component is not used up. -10%.

Some supernatural abilities are powered by a ritual that must be performed on a regular basis, instead of every time the spell is used. If not, the ability shuts down until you can invoke

the ritual. Decide if it’s required once per *day* or once per *session*; either way, the following values are fair.

*Requires simple ritual:* It merely calls for 1d minutes of quiet chanting, and simple materials weighing no more than a pound. -5%.

*Requires typical ritual:* It involves cumbersome preparation and materials (lots of loud chanting, several candles, a bonfire, a complicated circle drawn on the floor, etc.), or a *successful* casting of a relevant spell at minimum FP cost, taking 1d×5 minutes either way. -10%.

*Requires complex ritual:* It’s something entailing 1d/2 hours of work, serious expense, actively illegal or somewhat dangerous behavior, or some combination thereof. -20%.

### Other Accessibilities

*Only on those who share a language with me:* This commonly accompanies Hearing-Based (*Sense-Based*, p. B109) on mental-influence abilities. -10%.

*Only while moving:* Abilities that let the user defy gravity – Clinging, Walk on Air, Walk on Liquid, etc. – often have this. In a sci-fi game, pair it with Requires Low Gravity (p. 17). It’s incompatible with All-Out (p. 11). If the user stops moving, he falls. This is worth -10% if he must take at least a step per second, -20% if he must travel at half Move, or -30% if he must use his full Move.

*Only while succumbing to (disadvantage with self-control roll):* The ability is available only while the user is giving into his disadvantage, whether voluntarily or because he failed a self-control roll. The size of the limitation is equal to the *unmodified* size of the disadvantage, as a percentage; e.g., “Only

while succumbing to Gluttony” would be -5%, regardless of the self-control roll chosen. See *Only When Berserk* (p. 16) for a special case and *Required Disadvantages* (p. 16) for disadvantages that lack self-control numbers.

*Only while using (ability):* This ability turns on only when a different ability is in use. For this to be a valid limitation, both abilities must be useful on their own and neither can have a Link (p. B106) to the other. -10%.

*Only with assistants:* Some supernatural abilities require ritual or worship by others to work. Halve the basic point value that Maintenance (p. B143) gives for that number of people and write it as a percentage; e.g., “11-20 people” is -25%.

*Requires (item):* This variant of “Requires material component” (above) suits abilities that seem like they should use gadget limitations (pp. B116-117) but actually work with *any* piece of appropriate mundane equipment. For example, a super-archer with a special, custom bow would buy his Innate Attack with gadget limitations. However, one who can pick up *any* bow and make unrealistic shots would use Accessibility, Requires bow; if his bow is stolen or damaged, he can just run into a sporting goods shop and grab another. -10%.

*While conscious:* Your ability requires a Concentrate maneuver (never a Ready or a free action) to activate, and it switches off immediately if you lose consciousness. Use this with switchable abilities, but not with transient ones (including most attacks), as those automatically shut down after the turn in which you use them. -5%.

## LIMITATIONS ON DISADVANTAGES

Disadvantages can take limitations; some of the disadvantages from the *Basic Set* have special limitations, and Mitigator (p. B112) is a general limitation designed specifically for them. However, this doesn't mean limitations should be applied freely to disadvantages. Many general limitations produce unbalanced results when added directly to disadvantages. To illustrate, consider these two characters:

Ada has IQ 10 [0] and IQ +2 (Accessibility, Only during the day, -20%) [32], for a total of 32 points.

Bob has IQ 12 [40] and IQ -2 (Accessibility, Only at night, -20%) [-32], for a total of 8 points.

Both have IQ 12 during the day and IQ 10 at night, but Bob has spent a fraction of what Ada has. That's because most limitations in *GURPS* have *modest* values; a trait losing 50% of its utility might save only 20% of its value. (See *Accessibility*, pp. 4-5, for more.) With positive traits, like increased attributes and advantages, this helps prevent abuse. But with negative traits, like reduced attributes and disadvantages, it can actually *facilitate* abuse.

### Mitigator (Horde Intelligence)

A common fantasy and sci-fi trope is the horde of creatures who are moronic individually, but who act with frightening intellect as a *group*. To represent this, give them a racial IQ penalty with Mitigator, Horde Intelligence (-60%). This value doesn't vary by how tough the creatures are, because regardless, the mob is ephemeral.

When using this limitation, the horde's density is what matters. Two creatures or more per square yard is a true mob, and needed to erase the full penalty. For a less-dense horde (0.3 people per square yard is the average on a city sidewalk outside of rush hour, while one person per square yard is a visible crowd), multiply the IQ penalty by  $[1 - (\text{crowd density}/2)]$  and round for the worse to find the current penalty. Remember that IQ penalties lower Will and Per, and skills based on IQ, Will, or Per. Thus, each -1 to IQ mitigated gives +1 to all these things.

In all cases, an actual horde is needed – no tossing two critters in a closet to make them smarter. If there are fewer members than the point value of the IQ penalty, the Mitigator doesn't kick in.

*Example:* Because ants exhibit a strange proto-intelligence in groups, the GM gives his giant ants IQ 6 along with IQ-4 (Mitigator, Horde Intelligence, -60%) [-32]. Normally, they have IQ 2, but in hordes of at least 32 ants, their IQ *may* increase. Packed at densities of 2 ants/square yard, they function at IQ 6. Down to 1.5 ants/square yard, they have IQ 5. Below that, to 1 ant/square yard, they get IQ 4. Until 0.5 ant/square yard, they get IQ 3. At lower densities, they're IQ 2.

Thus, for the most part, general limitations (aside from Mitigator) shouldn't be applied to disadvantages. Instead, the best option is to take the disadvantage at full value, and then take an advantage that *counters* the disadvantage to apply any limitations to.

*Example:* The counter to Deafness [-20] would be No Deafness [20]. So, rather than take Deafness (Accessibility, Not when under direct sunlight, -10%) [-18], it's more fair to take Deafness [-20] + No Deafness (Accessibility, Only in direct sunlight, -30%) [14], for a net -6 points.

Though slightly more complex, this method produces fair results. To keep things simpler, the GM might want to figure out what limitations would be applied to the "counter" advantage, subtract those from -100%, and treat the result as a special limitation for that disadvantage.

*Example (continued):* No Deafness (the "counter") ended up with a -30% limitation. -100% minus -30% is -70%; thus, rather than writing out both traits on the character sheet, the GM could tell the player to treat "Not under direct sunlight" as a -70% limitation here. It works out the same: Deafness (Not under direct sunlight, -70%) [-6].

## EITHER/OR LIMITATIONS

Some concepts call for an "either/or" limitation. For example, a creature with Damage Resistance may have thick skin and an armored carapace on its belly (*either* Tough Skin or Partial, Vitals Only). Or using your Luck may have to be declared in advance for everything except defensive rolls (*either* Active or Defensive). When such a combination comes up, just multiply the percentage values of both limitations together to find the fair value. (*Exception:* If either exceeds -80%, reduce it to -80% before this calculation.)

*Example:* A fantasy race can produce pheromones that knock out males automatically, but give females a HT roll to resist. The Fatigue Attack thus has *either* Accessibility, Males Only (-20%) or Resistible, HT (-30%) as a limitation. Since  $0.20 \times 0.30 = 0.06$ , this is a -6% limitation.

This value is guaranteed to be *mathematically* fair, since it's just an inverted way of applying *Limited Enhancements* (p. B111). However, after obtaining the value, the GM may wish to adjust it slightly to produce a result that *feels* fairer overall. In the example above, rounding that -6% down to -10% wouldn't be unreasonable. In all cases, though, the final value *must* give less of a discount than either of the base limitations.

## PARTLY LIMITED ABILITIES

You needn't apply the same modifiers to every level of a "leveled" advantage like Damage Resistance or Innate Attack. Applying a limitation to only part of the advantage lets you create an ability that's more potent in situations where the limitation doesn't interfere. Other modifiers can still apply to the entire ability.

*Example:* Summer has TK 10 [50] and TK +20 (Accessibility, Only in direct sunlight, -30%) [70]. She can always use TK 10, but her level increases to 30 in direct sunlight.

As an alternative way of expressing the above, you can multiply the limitation value by the percentage (or fraction) of levels that you're limiting, and then apply it to the entire advantage. It produces the same result, but often looks cleaner and simpler.

*Example (continued):* Since we're limiting 2/3 of Summer's TK, we could multiply that Accessibility limitation value by 2/3 (-30% × 2/3 = -20%) and write the whole thing as TK 30 (One-third power except in direct sunlight, -20%) [120].

This is how Weakened Without Preparation (p. B114) works: The value of the limitation is halved because it applies to only half the levels of the ability.

## BELOW THE MINIMUM

One of the ways in which **GURPS** prevents abuse is by limiting a trait's net modifier to no worse than -80%. For example, an advantage with a base cost of 50 points will never cost less than 10 points, no matter how many limitations one adds.

However, sometimes an advantage is so extremely limited that it becomes hard to justify charging even 20%. In such a case, remember that the GM always has the right to set a new cost for this ability by fiat! If he feels that 10% is fairer, or 5%, or even 1%, he can change the limitation cap to -90%, -95%, or -99%, as needed, *for that one trait*. He may even allow an expensive ability to be bought as a perk, if the limitations on it are extreme enough to warrant this. There's no formula for determining this, only the art of comparing what the ability *does* to the effects of other, existing advantages.

*Example:* Samantha is creating a racial template for half-demons. One of their minor abilities is that, in times of great stress, they can shrug off hellfire attacks. Regeneration (Extreme) costs 150 points; she adds Accessibility, Only when attacked by demons (-50%), Emergencies Only (-30%), and Limited, Flames (-60%). By standard rules, nearly half of that -140% should be ignored, capping at -80% for a final cost of 30 points. This seems rather high to Samantha, who feels that this ability is about as worthwhile as High Pain Threshold and Recovery – a value of 10 points (approximately -93% in effective limitations). As the GM, she adjusts the cost by fiat.

With extreme enough drawbacks, an advantage can even “wrap around” a full -100% and become a *disadvantage!* This is the case with Shadow Form (p. B83), which effectively treats Always On as a *true* -140% limitation, turning the 50-point advantage into a -20-point disadvantage. Or Alternate Form, which **GURPS Horror** turns into a disadvantage if you are *completely* unable to control or restrain your transformed self.

The GM has the right to make this change as well, though extreme care is needed. For something to be an actual disadvantage, the drawbacks must *significantly* outweigh the benefits. In most cases, applying standard limitations is the best way to handle it – at most, relaxing the -80% cap (as shown above). In *all* cases, if the user can turn off the effect or otherwise has *any* control over it, it is never a disadvantage.



## OTHER WAYS TO SAVE

In addition to the percentage-based discounts provided by limitations, **GURPS** offers a range of ways to save points that amount to “divide the cost by X.” These divisor-based reductions can be combined with each other when it makes sense – though it is rare for more than two to be simultaneously applicable. (If a player insists, “I want the potential to use an internal mouth as a character point-powered alternative ability to my Payload,” it's up to the GM whether to humor him or retain sanity by running away.) In all cases, they *can* be combined with enhancements and limitations.

To avoid confusion, always work in the following order.

1. If the ability is leveled, multiply its per-level cost by the number of levels you're buying.
2. Apply all enhancements and limitations, and then round up to the nearest point.
3. Apply every relevant divisor-based reduction *except* that for alternative abilities. Do so successively, rounding up to the nearest point after applying each one.
4. The current value is the effective value for making this into an alternative ability. If you want to do so, and this is not the most expensive trait among the set of alternatives, divide cost by 5 and round up to the nearest point.



*Example:* In a fantasy game, Zach wants his necromancer to be able to raise a *lot* of zombies when necessary. He follows the four steps.

1. The raising is based on Allies (51-100 zombies; Built on 25%; Constantly) [48]. It doesn't come in levels.

2. He adds the modifiers Accessibility, Requires dead bodies (-10%), Minion (+0%), Requires IQ Roll (-10%), and Summonable (+100%). This brings the cost to 87 points.

3. Because this will be used rarely and in desperation, he makes it character point-powered (p. 9). This divides the cost by 5, to 18 points.

4. Finally, he wants to make this an alternative ability (below) to his Magery 2. The GM considers the ramifications, and rules that once he raises his army, all of his existing spells will instantly end, and he cannot cast another spell as long as even one zombie remains alive. Zach agrees. His Magery costs 25 points and his Allies currently cost 18 points, thus the Allies are an alternative to the Magery. This divides their cost by 5, to 4 points, which is the price Zach actually pays for this emergency contingency plan.

As shown above, combining multiple divisor-based reductions makes it possible to acquire powerful abilities *very* cheaply. As such, the GM must carefully vet all such cases, and enforce the drawbacks of each reduction rigorously.

## Duplicated Advantages

You can buy the same advantage more than once – usually as insurance against one of your powers failing (see *GURPS Powers* for details). Pay full price only for the most expensive ability, after all modifiers; the others are at 1/5 cost (round up). Unlike Alternative Abilities (below), there's no connection between these abilities. The discount simply reflects the diminishing returns on buying an advantage multiple times.

If the advantage comes in levels, you can instead opt to pay full price for both versions. This lets you add the levels together in a situation where both powers would work, provided your powers aren't opposed in some way (GM's decision).

## ALTERNATIVE ABILITIES

It often makes sense to define several abilities as distinct, mutually exclusive "settings" of a single, adaptable trait. For instance, Burning Attack, Ladar, and Laser Communication might be different intensity levels and modulations for a laser that can function as a weapon or a sense or a means of communication. Similarly, two Innate Attacks might represent different power settings for a ray gun. If only one such ability works at a time, it's reasonable to give a cost break. If the GM agrees, those with "alternative abilities" pay full price only for their most expensive ability. All the rest are at 1/5 cost.

Alternative abilities don't have to be limited to one ability at a time. If you want to be able to use any two of the abilities at a time, pay full price for the *two* most expensive abilities (and 1/5 cost for the rest). To use three at a time, pay full price for the *three* most expensive, and so on. It helps to think of this as providing a number of "slots," each of which can be filled with

one of the alternative abilities. A single ability can only fill one slot at a time; see below.

*Example:* Misty buys DR 10, Sealed, and Slippery 10 as alternative abilities with two slots. She can have any two of those three options "on" at once, but she could *not* load her DR 10 into both slots for a total DR 20!

The GM shouldn't permit abilities with incompatible in-game explanations as alternatives. Obscure and Burning Attack in the form of smoke and a fireball are reasonable alternatives . . . but if the smoke were darkness and the fireball a laser, the combination would need superscience or the supernatural to make sense!

Alternative abilities have three drawbacks:

1. The number of abilities you can use simultaneously is limited to the number you paid full price for, and it's impossible to have a Link (p. B106) between them. To change out a slot requires a Ready maneuver. After switching to an attack (Affliction, Binding, Innate Attack, Leech, Neutralize, Obscure, Static, and anything else the GM views as an "attack"), switching to a different attack in that slot is a free action. If the user can make more than one attack per turn, he must use the same setting for all of them.

2. Anything that disables one ability disables the whole collection, regardless of the number of slots. If injury or critical failure cripples or burns out any of the abilities – or a foe neutralizes or drains one – none of them are available until the affected one recovers!

3. Using an ability that can't be activated again until its duration expires (e.g., Luck, Neutralize with the Power Theft enhancement, or almost anything with the Ranged enhancement) effectively "freezes" that slot – the ability cannot be swapped out of it until the duration ends. You may continue to swap *other* abilities into your remaining slots; if you only had one slot, then your entire alternative ability array is frozen for the duration.

For additional notes that apply to attacks, see Alternative Attacks (p. B61).

## POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES

A potential advantage is a placeholder or "down payment" toward an advantage you plan to later add. As explained on p. B33, you must work out with the GM when you will acquire the "full" version. This could be a specific in-game time (e.g., when you turn 18), but it's more commonly a set of circumstances (e.g., when you defeat the bandit horde) or even a meta-game decision (e.g., when you've saved up enough points to afford it).

Work out the cost of the advantage as usual, and then *halve* its value; that's what you actually pay now. When the advantage "matures" into the full version, you're responsible for paying the remainder of the cost. If you lack the unspent character points to do so, the GM will garnish your future earned bonus points until the debt is covered. (Players who attempt to abuse this by finding a way to mature things in the first few game sessions have no complaint coming if the GM decides instead to reduce attributes or remove advantages to cover the cost.)



## Why Bother with a Potential Advantage?

At first glance, it may seem more attractive simply to save character points until you can just buy the full advantage, as doing so gives you more flexibility in case you change your mind later. However, a potential advantage has its own benefits.

Most notably, it establishes your right to acquire that trait later, without requiring further in-game explanation. The GM might balk if you wanted to spend points on a powerful Patron group without first earning their trust and goodwill . . . but if that Patron is a potential advantage, then *obviously* you took care of that before the game even started.

Further benefits depend on what type of potential advantage you have.

### Halved Advantage

The most common potential advantage is one that functions at about “half strength” while it remains potential. Heir (p. B33) is one good example; others include Apprentice Gadgeteer (you use the *average* of the penalties for *New Inventions* and *Gadgeteering*), Budding Language Talent (your *written* languages are one level higher), and Limited Patron (only one small part of the organization has your back). Once it matures, you have access to the full version.

### Latent Advantage

In theory, you have full access to the advantage – you just can’t figure out how to make it *work*. This is almost exclusively applied to supernatural abilities, often as part of a power (see pp. B254-257 and *GURPS Powers* for more). As long as it is not *also* Unconscious Only, you can attempt to use it: Roll against the controlling attribute; if there is none, use Will for mental abilities or HT for physical ones.

*Modifiers:* Normal situational modifiers for the ability; from -5 for a stress-free situation to +5 for a true life-and-death emergency; any Hard to Use (p. 14) penalty; *half* any bonus from Reliable or Talent (round down).

On a *critical success*, the ability works perfectly for one use; on a normal success by 10+, it works at half-power for one use. All other modifiers on it apply normally; in particular, if it’s Unreliable, you must *also* roll for that. On any lesser success or a failure, there’s no effect. Critical failures should be mean, interesting, and fun . . . for the GM.

### Schrödinger’s Advantage

You don’t have to specify what the advantage is. Instead, at some critical juncture in an adventure, you will suddenly discover (decide on) your new ability! The GM must approve the desired addition before it manifests; you can’t say that you suddenly grow wings in a realistic game. This is a *powerful* option, balanced by the fact that this potential advantage does absolutely nothing until it matures.

### Secret Advantage

You have a full-strength advantage – one equal to twice the points you spent on this potential one – but have no idea what it is! Instead, you trust the GM to choose the advantage (or set of advantages), which must be one that wouldn’t be immediately obvious to your PC. The GM should honor this trust,

choosing something that will genuinely, though secretly, help you. Good examples include Luck (used on rolls the GM makes for you and on enemy attacks against you), Magic Resistance (*if* magic exists and is a common threat!), Patron (though not with the Secret limitation, as that’s redundant here), Rapid Healing, Resistant, and Serendipity.

Once the advantage is revealed, you must pay for it. If the GM allows, you may pay to force its revelation. Either way, it functions normally and under your control (if applicable). It *is* possible, however, to go an entire campaign without that happening. As long as the GM can keep the secret and the player is enjoying it, this advantage doesn’t *have* to realize its potential.

## Internal Advantages

In a game like *GURPS*, where vehicles and buildings can be built as characters, some advantages need to apply *internally*, to allow interaction with occupants and cargo. A character is assumed to have no senses (except pain) or manipulatory ability inside himself. However, he can buy the following advantages:

- Internal Arms or Strikers, for 1/5 of the usual cost of an Extra Arm or Striker.
- Internal Hearing [4].
- Internal Sight [10].
- Internal Speech [5].
- Internal Taste and Smell [1].

New or enhanced internal senses (e.g., Internal Radar or Internal Discriminatory Smell) and internal weapons (e.g., Internal Extra Mouth or Internal Toxic Attack) are also available at 1/5 of the usual cost.

These costs assume the internal advantage is usable anywhere within the body. If it can only reach certain areas, this is a -50% limitation.

## CHARACTER POINT-POWERED ABILITIES

In fiction, some powerful abilities must be held in reserve until a *true* emergency. One way to emulate this is to fuel those abilities with a truly precious resource: unspent character points. *GURPS Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys* covers this topic in detail, so the following is a *summary* of those rules.

A character point-powered ability has its cost divided by 5. Each use costs character points, and in between uses, the capability is inert. The cost is set dramatically, based on how unreasonable it is to shoehorn into the story.

- *Minor:* The use fits the scene perfectly – it’s dramatically appropriate and precisely in line with the GM’s desires. *1 point.*
- *Moderate:* The use is believable, given the PC’s other abilities, and can be made to fit into the story. *2 points.*
- *Major:* The use is about the player wanting to show off or make gains at the expense of the storyline. *From 3 points to the character point-powered ability’s cost (that is, 1/5 of full cost), depending on the level of disruption.*

# CHAPTER TWO

# NEW

# LIMITATIONS

Unlike in *GURPS Power-Ups 4: Enhancements*, there are no “eye” symbols to warn which of these limitations might cause problems in a game. This is because limitations on their own are unlikely to break anything; they weaken an ability, making it *harder* to abuse.

That’s not to say the GM doesn’t need to keep an eye on player-created abilities with limitations. Specifically, he has to make sure that every limitation meets the following criteria.

1. Is the combination of limitation and other modifiers legal? A limitation shouldn’t be combined with its opposing enhancement (e.g., Increased Range and Reduced Range); “penetration modifiers” cannot be combined; and some modifiers are mutually exclusive, as spelled out in their descriptions. The GM *can* overrule these restrictions, if doing so makes sense for the ability being created, but should proceed cautiously – first seeing if there’s a way to achieve the same effect that *doesn’t* bend or break the rules.

2. Is the combination of limitation and trait legal? Many limitations have rules about which traits they’re allowed on. As above, the GM can break this rule but should make sure he understands why it’s there in the first place. A limitation designed for attack abilities may produce strange results when applied to a movement trait – or it may just fail to limit the ability much, if at all. Which leads to . . .

3. Is the ability being limited appropriately? Even if there’s no rule forbidding a particular trait/limitation combination, it’s crucial to ensure that limitations aren’t giving “free points.” An Accessibility like “Only in water” may be worth -30% for most abilities, but would be -5% at *best* when applied to Amphibious. When a limitation overlaps with built-in restrictions on the way an advantage can be used, the GM shouldn’t hesitate to reduce the value of the limitation – or in extreme cases, declare that it’s just a special effect.

## Active Defense

-40%

This limitation is appropriate for any passive defensive ability, such as Damage Resistance, Improved G-Tolerance, Magic Resistance, Pressure Support, Protected Sense, Radiation Tolerance, Resistant, Sealed, Slippery, Temperature Tolerance, or Vacuum Support.

Your ability only protects you against threats you’re aware of – and only if you make a roll to interpose it in time. This roll is at  $DX/2 + 3$ , +1 for Combat Reflexes. If you try to use the same ability more than once in a turn, apply a cumulative -4 per attempt after the first. You roll at -4 if stunned, and can’t roll at all in situations where you wouldn’t get an active defense (attack from behind, unconscious, etc.).

If your roll fails, *all* future attempts to activate the ability (until you succeed) cost a flat 1 FP but are at no additional penalty. However, if you drop to 3 FP or less from this, your ability shuts down until *all* FP are regained.

Your ability is independent of your actual active defenses. It does not count as your active defense against an attack; it is activated alongside it, not as an alternative to it. You may always choose whether to attempt your activation roll before your defense, after it, or not at all.

*Active Defense, Independent:* If you can make this activation roll against surprise attacks (e.g., your DR is reflex armor that triggers upon being struck), halve the value of this limitation to -20%. This also eliminates the -4 for being stunned and allows a roll even if unconscious.

## Under the Hood: Active Defense

Active Defense is really a special case of Requires (Attribute) Roll (p. 17), which itself is a variant of Unreliable (p. B116) – hence the 1 FP cost to activate your ability after a failure. The -40% cost comes from two places:

1. Since Requires DX Roll is -10%, but the active defense is based on *half* of DX, it’s only fair to double the value of the limitation to -20%.

2. Having to be aware of the attack, conscious, etc. – and being at -4 if stunned – is comparable to Active Only on Psychometry (*GURPS Powers*, p. 69) or Directional, Front on DR (p. B47), worth an extra -20%.

The -20% “Independent” variant of Active Only simply eliminates #2. It would be reasonable to use these components to build similar custom limitations; e.g., a defense that required the user to sense an attack would combine Requires Per Roll (-5%) with having to be aware of the attack (-20%) for a net -25%.

## Aftermath

### Variable

You suffer the effects of a Temporary Disadvantage, but only once your advantage switches off. You can add this only to a switchable advantage that you can and *must* eventually turn off – whether because you’ll run out of FP to maintain it, its duration is fixed by Limited Use or Trigger, or leaving it on indefinitely would negatively affect your health. Find the limitation value as usual, and halve it.

A disadvantage with no self-control roll will be in full effect for as long as you used the modified trait, with a minimum of 10 minutes. A disadvantage with a self-control roll instead leaves you with an urge that endures until you get into a situation where you have to make that roll. Success means you fight the urge. Failure means you give in for at least 10 minutes. Either way, there are no further effects.

### Expanded Aftermath

With GM permission, other limitations may have Aftermath variants that kick in after the fact, halving their normal values. For example, Insubstantiality (Aftermath Costs Fatigue, 2 FP, -5%; Maximum Duration, 30 minutes, -25%) would allow you to phase out for up to half an hour without paying FP. However, the instant you resumed tangibility, you would lose a total of 2 FP for the first minute and 1 FP for each additional minute. If you had been insubstantial for 20 minutes, the loss of 21 FP would likely knock you unconscious and cause serious injury!

## All-Out

### -25%

Your ability requires an All-Out Attack maneuver; you can’t use it with any other maneuver (e.g., Move or Change Posture). You have no active defense while using it. If it would let you move more than a step, you’re limited to half your Move in a forward direction. You may attack if the advantage is one that lets you do so, and receive the benefits of All-Out Attack, but All-Out isn’t just for attack abilities – you can add it to any advantage that requires a maneuver to use (typically Concentrate or Ready), replacing the standard maneuver with All-Out Attack. Explain what you’re doing that limits you: deep concentration, spinning in place, etc.

*All-Out Concentrate:* This variant of All-Out is suitable only for abilities that normally require a Concentrate maneuver to use. Your ability requires an All-Out Concentrate maneuver to use. This new maneuver, first introduced on p. 11 of *GURPS Psionic Powers*, gives you +1 to all rolls required to perform your ability, but at the cost of your active defenses. You may move only a step. If you are knocked down, injured, or otherwise distracted, you must make a Will-2 roll (the usual Will-3, at +1 for this maneuver) to maintain your concentration. -25%.

## Aspected

### -20%

Your ability works only when pursuing a specific class of related tasks or activities (e.g., athletics, combat, investigation, or social interaction), or in a specific area of daily life (e.g., job, personal health, or romance). The GM has the final say and can make the categories as broad or as narrow as he wishes.

The GM also decides which advantages can take Aspected. Suitable traits include Common Sense, Intuition, Serendipity, and those that directly alter your odds of success at tasks (Luck, Super Luck, Visualization, etc.). Certain aspects aren’t useful even on normally permitted abilities, though; for instance, Visualization is so slow that Aspected, Combat would make it worthless.

When applying Aspected to other advantages, it’s important to set the focus relative to what the trait can already do. For example, Aspected, Social would fit Common Sense but not Charisma, which is already limited to social interaction. However, Aspected, Job would fit both.

### (Notation)

Some limitations have a word or phrase in parentheses as part of the name; e.g., Requires (Attribute) Roll. When recording this on a character sheet, replace the parenthetical part with the appropriate term; e.g., “Requires IQ Roll.”

## Attracts Threats

### -5% or -10%

Something about your ability attracts a particular type of dangerous creature or person (the “threat”). The GM will secretly roll 3d each time you use this ability out of combat – at most once per minute – and once after any battle in which it was used at all. On a 6 or less (-5%) or 9 or less (-10%), the threat noticed you from afar and has traveled to attack! If the GM has established that your threat is already present (e.g., you use an advantage with Attracts Threats, Reptiles in a jungle full of snakes), he may add up to +3 to the target number before rolling.

If you have multiple abilities with this limitation, the GM rolls just once if *any* of them were used. Similarly, if multiple people have the same limitation, the GM rolls only once; if the threat shows up, it attacks everyone! This applies only if everyone has a shared threat – Attracts Threats, Ghosts and Attracts Threats, Birds do not interact in any meaningful way.

The GM needs to balance the threat encounter fairly. As a general rule, it should be a danger, but one that the character can reasonably overcome. A random encounter table can be a fun way to mix light annoyances with the occasional boss monster.

## Backlash

### Variable

You suffer noxious effects when you use your ability. Choose these from among Attribute Penalty, Incapacitation, Irritant, and Stunning, as defined for Affliction (p. B35). If you succumb for a minute (a second, for Stunning), and can roll against HT once per minute (second) after that to recover, apply a limitation equal in size to the equivalent enhancements. If you get a HT roll to resist, and the effects last for minutes (seconds) equal to your margin of failure, halve this. For instance, Nauseated is worth +30% on Affliction, so nausea is worth -30% if automatic or -15% if resistible.



## Blockable

-5% or -10%

Ranged attack abilities (Affliction, Binding, Innate Attack, advantages with the Ranged enhancement, etc.) normally work like firearms when it comes to the target's legal active defenses: the victim can only dodge. Abilities that affect an area – including anything with Area Effect, Cone, or Explosion – only allow an attempt to dive for cover, whether or not they're ranged. If either kind of attack produces an effect that the target can try to block, it has a -5% limitation – or -10%, if he can attempt a block or parry.

Use this limitation to simulate slow-moving projectiles (like nets or Missile spells), summoned swarms of biting creatures, and so on. To block an attack with Blockable and Overhead – like a rain of stones – the defender must hold his shield over his head.

*Can Be Parried:* Your attack can be dodged or parried, but not blocked. This variant (really just the extra -5% for a fully Blockable attack without the *base* -5%) suits few real-world attacks, but may make sense for certain supernatural ones. -5%.

## Blood Agent, Reversed

-40%

Your attack requires you to *bleed on* your victim. You must suffer at least 1 HP of injury from a cutting, impaling, or piercing attack, and then ensure that your blood reaches your target. This is automatic if combined with Aura; otherwise, it requires an attack roll. The GM may rule that such attacks simply don't work underwater or in other environments where blood would be diluted or washed away. The target's DR works normally.

For abilities that aren't attacks, such as personal advantages that activate automatically after you're hurt, use Trigger, Injury (-15%) instead.

## Cardiac Stress

Variable

You can take this limitation only on a switchable advantage. While in use, it places undue stress on your heart; you must roll against HT immediately (14+ always fails) and then continue to make periodic rolls. Failure means loss of 1d FP; critical failure means a heart attack (p. B429).

Cost depends on how often you need to make the HT roll:

Frequency	Modifier
Every second	-50%
Every 10 seconds	-40%
Every minute	-30%
Every 10 minutes	-20%
Every hour	-10%

*Cerebral Stress:* This variant, especially suitable for mental abilities, works like Cardiac Stress, with two differences. First, the roll is made against the lower of HT or Will, as both mental and physical health are a factor. Second, critical failure puts you into a coma (p. B429) instead of causing a heart attack.

## Corrupting

-20%

A trait with this limitation causes you to accumulate Corruption each time it's used. You gain 1 point of Corruption per point by which Corrupting reduces the cost of the modified trait.

Corrupting can also be applied to a disadvantage that offers a self-control roll. In that case, it's a +20% *enhancement*, worsening the disadvantage. You gain 1 point of Corruption per 5 points of unmodified disadvantage value each time you fail a self-control roll.

The GM is free to modify the amount of Corruption gained, changing the values above. See *GURPS Horror*, pp. 146-148, for the effects of Corruption.

*Like a corpse in a shallow grave,  
corruption rises to the surface.*

*– Ariel, in Soul Reaver*

## Costs Fatigue, Variable

Variable

Those adding Costs Fatigue to an Innate Attack that has the Variable enhancement may, if the GM permits, specify that the FP cost is proportional to the dice of damage used. To find the size of the limitation:

1. Set the FP cost to use the ability at full effect.
2. Divide this maximum FP cost by the attack's maximum dice of damage to find the FP cost per die.
3. Multiply cost per die by "average" damage dice –  $(1 + \text{maximum dice})/2$  – to find average FP cost.
4. Drop all fractions.

The result is the number of levels of Cost Fatigue to take.

*Example:* Laser Lad has Burning Attack 10d with Variable and Costs Fatigue. His FP cost at full effect is 20. His attack requires  $20/10 = 2$  FP per die. "Average" damage dice are  $(1 + 10)/2 = 5.5$ d, so average FP cost is  $2 \times 5.5 = 11$  FP. He takes Costs Fatigue 11, for -55%. When he attacks, he pays 2 FP for 1d, 4 FP for 2d, and so on, to a maximum of 20 FP for 10d.

Use the same method to add a variable FP cost to nonattack abilities that come in levels; just substitute levels of effect for dice. Abilities other than attacks don't need the Variable enhancement to use this option.

## Costs Hit Points

Variable

This limitation works exactly like Costs Fatigue (above and p. B111), except that it depletes HP instead of FP, and is worth twice as much: -10% per HP per use, doubled to -20% if the cost is per second. It can also convert FP costs built into advantages to HP costs, at -5% per FP converted – or -10% per FP, if the cost is per second.

## Easily Resisted

-5%/level

This limitation can be applied only to an ability that affects someone else *and* offers him a resistance roll to avoid the effects. If your target possesses an ability that aids his resistance (e.g., Magic Resistance or Resistant), multiply its resistance bonus or skill penalty by (1 + your Easily Resisted level). If not, he gets a bonus equal to your Easily Resisted level to all rolls to resist. Your roll to use the ability is unaffected.

The GM must set the maximum level available. A cap of four to six levels is recommended.

## Environmental

Variable

Only advantages that affect others can have this limitation. Your ability manipulates an existing item or condition, which must touch or surround the target. Unlike Accessibility, this doesn't influence activation – you can trigger your ability anywhere, barring a failed roll or another limitation. However, your ability is effective only if the subject is in a particular environment . . . and the GM can alter its impact if the environment you're attempting to manipulate is at all unusual.

*Example:* A Binding that commands plants to entangle the victim would do nothing in an area without vegetation. It would be little more than a nuisance if the only plant nearby were a small potted fern . . . and totally unpredictable in an alien jungle!

The GM should base the value on the environment's rarity.

*Very Common:* Environment is present all the time, outside of one or two unusual situations that would be difficult for an enemy to arrange; e.g., in a gravity field, in the presence of air, or on a planet. -5%.

*Common:* Environment is present most of the time, but a resourceful foe could arrange for it to be absent; e.g., in contact with dust or in the presence of microbes. -10%.

*Occasional:* Environment is often absent, or easily avoided by enemies (although a crafty user might be able to "rig" an important encounter to work around this); e.g., in a city, in the wilderness, outdoors, or touching the ground. -20%.

*Rare:* Environment is usually absent and difficult for the user to arrange; e.g., in a storm, in dense vegetation, in the desert, or underground. -40%.

*Very Rare:* Environment is so unlikely that the ability is useless most of the time; e.g., in lava, in quicksand, or in vacuum. -80%.

The GM should forbid proposed Environmental limitations that duplicate one of the ability's built-in restrictions; e.g., "in water" isn't valid for Control (Water). In games with powers, an ability that gets -10% for a mundane countermeasure or insulator (see *GURPS Powers*, pp. 20 and 24) as part of its power modifier already has this limitation – don't apply it a second time.

## Fickle

-20%

Your ability is or seems sentient, and sometimes reacts poorly. Make an *unmodified* reaction roll whenever you wish to

use it. For an attack, make this roll before each use. For other abilities, the advantage works until you need to make a success roll for it . . . then make a reaction roll. For instance, Flight requires a reaction roll when you try a DX roll to "push the envelope," or an Aerobatics or Flight skill roll, while Dark Vision calls for a reaction roll anytime you attempt a Vision roll in the dark.

On a reaction of Neutral or better (10+), the ability works as expected and you can attempt your attack roll, DX roll, Sense roll, etc., as applicable. A Very Good reaction (16-18) gives +1 to the ensuing roll; an Excellent reaction (19+) gives +2.

On a reaction of Poor or worse (9 or less), the ability fails. If it wasn't already active, it refuses to activate. If it was active, it shuts down. This doesn't normally endanger you directly; for instance, Flight sets you down gently and Insubstantiality leaves you in open space. Of course, the sudden loss of DR in battle, Dark Vision in an unlit room full of traps, and so forth can endanger you indirectly.

On a reaction of Very Bad or worse (3 or less), the ability does endanger you or turns on you in some unpleasant way. Flight drops you like a stone, Insubstantiality leaves you stranded inside a wall, your attack blasts you, and so forth. The GM should be creative!

You can try to invoke a failed ability every second if you wish, but the reaction roll is at a cumulative -1 per repeated attempt as your ability (or the forces behind it) become increasingly annoyed by your requests. To eliminate this penalty, you must go for a full hour without using your ability.

*Requires Reaction Roll:* Your ability works as described above, but with two major changes. First, all normal reaction modifiers apply. Second, you can substitute an Influence roll; if so, unless the GM feels that it was especially appropriate or inappropriate, success produces the equivalent of a Good reaction. -5%.

*Dame Fortune is a fickle gipsy,  
And always blind, and often  
tipsy.*

– Winthrop M. Praed,  
"The Haunted Tree"

## Glamour

Variable

This can be applied to any advantage that alters how others perceive you, such as Appearance, Chameleon, Elastic Skin, Invisibility, Shapeshifting (with the Cosmetic limitation), Silence, or Voice. Your ability controls others' perceptions through a persistent hypnotic suggestion, mental illusion, or psychic compulsion. It doesn't affect machines.

Living victims get a Will roll to resist your influence and sense you normally, and individuals with Mind Shield may add their level to this roll. A resistance roll against Will-5 is worth -5%. Each +1 to the roll is a worth another -5% (e.g., Will+4 is -50%).

It makes sense for certain abilities to allow a Per- or IQ-based resistance roll to see past the glamour, as opposed to a Will-based one. This is a special effect that does not change the value of the limitation. (The same applies when switching the resistance roll for Resistible, p. B115).

## Granted by (Other)

-40%

This is a general version of Granted by Familiar (*Familiars*, p. B38). Your ability is not innate or inherent; rather, it is something that another individual – not an omnipresent deity! – empowers you to do when physically nearby. Examples include a mage who can only fly when his hawk familiar is with him (Flight with Granted by Familiar), a martial artist who's faster when his ancestor is present in spirit (Altered Time Rate with Granted by Ancestor), and a robot whose senses are enhanced by an add-on drone (Hyperspectral Vision with Granted by Drone).

This is a significant limitation because the ability is inherent to the *granter*, not you. Thus, if he wishes to deny you access to it, for any reason, you immediately lose it. (Assuming the granter is an Ally, this will be rare, but even Allies can be mind-controlled, reprogrammed, swayed by Fast-Talk, etc.)

Your ability also goes away if the granter is ever stunned, unconscious, killed, or simply not present. There's some leeway in the definition of "not present," so it's important for the GM and player to agree on what this means ahead of time. In *all* cases, if the granter is an Ally and his appearance roll fails, he is not present. Past that, a good guideline is that the granter must be able to reach you in a minute or less (thus, within 300 yards for the average person). However, this can be altered to fit the specific relationship.

*Example:* Zora is a cyberkid whose robot pal Alpha helps her process sensory data incredibly quickly. She buys this as Enhanced Time Sense (Granted by Alpha). But rather than Alpha's physical presence, what matters is her network connection to him. She can use her ETS whether Alpha is right next to her or miles away – but if anyone can jam that signal, it goes away no matter where he is.

### Granter Groups

What if you want a *swarm* of drones rather than just one? Or you're a supervillain who works best when his team of henchmen is cheering him on? This requires defining your granter as a group. The value of the limitation depends on how many members are in your group, as shown in the table.

Members	Value
2	-30%
3	-25%
4-5	-20%
6-7	-15%
8-10	-10%
11-15	-5%
16+	-0%

When any of the members are unhelpful, stunned, not present, etc., you lose their proportional value from the strength of this ability. For example, if you have a group of four people, each one missing weakens your ability by 25%. If none are present, then your ability doesn't work at all.

If the ability is one that wouldn't make sense to "weaken," you can treat each 10% loss (or fraction thereof) as -1 to all rolls to use it or +1 for others to resist. If that isn't meaningful either, treat the percentage loss as a limitation value and add the nearest level of Unreliable (p. B116)!

*You've seen the smallest  
glimpse of what we can give you.  
Success and fame will come to  
you without your needing to  
try . . . Say yes, daughter of Eve.  
Let us live in you.*

– Mike Carey,  
*Lucifer, Book One*

## Hard to Use

-5% per -3

Each level of Hard to Use, to a maximum of four levels, gives -3 to all rolls to use your ability. If it's part of a power, Talent doesn't help. This is incompatible with Reliable (*Power-Ups 4*, p. 16) and forbidden on ranged attacks (but see *Inaccurate*, p. B112).

## Immediate Preparation Required

Variable

You must concentrate for a long time before using your ability. Unlike Preparation Required (p. B114), you cannot concentrate and then save your ability for later use; it must be used as soon as it's ready. The value of this limitation depends on the amount of time that you must spend taking Concentrate maneuvers first:

Preparation Time	Modifier
1 minute	-30%
10 minutes	-45%
1 hour	-75%
8 hours	-90%

Advantages that normally take one minute or longer to activate cannot take Immediate Preparation Required, 1 Minute; use Takes Extra Time instead.

For fair results, the GM may wish to restrict Takes Extra Time to two levels; past that, use Immediate Preparation Required.

## Increased Immunity

-10%/level

This limitation can be taken on any ability that is resisted with a Quick Contest (like a Malediction). It provides a degree of "immunity" to anyone who successfully resists, making it either impossible or just more difficult to use your ability on him again. Where penalties for repeated attempts apply even without this limitation, they are above and beyond this drawback.



Each level of this limitation shifts this immunity up one degree on the chart below.

Degree	Effect
4	Permanently immune
3	Immune for one day <i>or</i> Permanent, cumulative -2
2	Immune for one hour <i>or</i> Cumulative -2 lasting one day
1	Cumulative -2 lasting one hour
0	No effect

If the advantage has a built-in immunity for those who resist (e.g., Mind Reading, which starts with degree 1 immunity: a cumulative -2 for the next hour), start on the most appropriate line and move up from there. Some degrees list two equally limiting effects; you must choose which alternative applies when adding this limitation.

If you do not roll to use the ability, interpret each -2 as +2 to your subjects' resistance rolls.

Terror (p. B93) is a special case: In addition to its natural degree 2 immunity, subjects *also* get +1 to resist further Fright Checks within 24 hours, whether they succeed or fail. Thus, for Terror, each level of Increased Immunity also increases that time frame, first to "+1 per Fright Check after the first within a month" and then to "+1 per Fright Check after the first, regardless of the time that passes."

### Informal

-50%

This limitation can be applied to various social advantages, including Clerical Investment, Legal Enforcement Powers, Legal Immunity, Security Clearance, and Tenure. You don't officially have the advantage in question – but you can exercise its privileges, and both the public and legal authorities accept you doing so. However, those benefits can be revoked at any time without formal proceedings of any kind. The GM is the judge of when this happens; he may be guided by reaction rolls. Many cinematic heroes have Legal Immunity with this limitation – the police cooperate with them, or juries won't convict them – but it can be taken away without even an administrative hearing if they do something unethical.

### Insubstantial Only

-30%

Your ability affects only intangible targets: beings with the Spirit meta-trait, individuals using Insubstantiality, and those using Clairsentience, Jumper, or Warp with the Projection special modifier (from **GURPS Powers**). This modifier is especially useful for attacks intended to exorcise spirits.

### Magnetic

see *Specific*, p. 18

### Maximum Duration

Variable

Available only for switchable, beneficial abilities that you could normally leave "on" indefinitely (e.g., Insubstantiality). Your ability can operate only for a limited length of time.

After that, it shuts down without warning and you can't reactivate it for five minutes.

The value of the limitation depends on the time limit:

Time Limit	Modifier
Less than 30 seconds	-75%
Up to 1 minute	-65%
Up to 10 minutes	-50%
Up to 30 minutes	-25%
Up to 1 hour	-10%
Up to 12 hours (or one night)	-5%
Greater than 12 hours	-0%

## Natural Malfunctions

Unreliable (p. B116) offers a "Malfunction" variant, intended for built-in firearms and similar gadgets. However, it can apply to *any* attack ability that doesn't work as well as it should. On an attack roll equal to or greater than Malf., roll 3d:

- 3-4** – The ability fails to go off and is crippled. See *Duration of Crippling Injuries* (p. B422) to determine recovery time. In some worlds, a Bioengineering, Physician, or Surgery roll can hasten recovery.
- 5-8** – The ability fails to go off and is temporarily unavailable. After three seconds, make a HT roll. Success means the ability comes back online. Otherwise, wait three more seconds and roll again. Critical failure on any of these HT rolls means the ability is crippled as in **3-4**.
- 9-11** – The attack fires a single shot and then fails as described for **5-8**.
- 12-14** – As **5-8**.
- 15-18** – As **3-4**, but the attack also strains the user. He suffers 1d-3 (minimum 1) each of fatigue and injury. DR doesn't protect.

### Minimum Duration

Variable

Available only for switchable abilities that would – in the GM's opinion – seriously inconvenience you if you couldn't deactivate them at will. Your ability must stay "on" for a certain period of time once activated; you can't shut it off before this time is up. Minimum Duration can never exceed Maximum Duration (if any).

The limitation's value depends on the minimum amount of time your ability stays on:

Minimum Time	Modifier
Less than 1 hour	-0%
Up to 8 hours	-5%
Up to 12 hours (or one night)	-10%
Up to 24 hours	-15%
Up to 1 week	-20%
Up to 1 month	-25%
Greater than 1 month	-30%

On an advantage that allows Always On (p. B110), this limitation is worth at *most* -5% less than Always On; e.g., if Always On is -20%, Minimum Duration can't go beyond -15%.

## Minimum Range

-5% or -10%

You can't use your ranged ability on a target inside a certain range. Use this for weapons that have a minimum fusing distance or that fire in a high arc, and for sensors with a "blind spot" within which they can't resolve targets. The GM should restrict this modifier to ranged abilities that are normally useful at relatively close range. This is worth -10% for a minimum range of 5% maximum range, or -5% for a minimum range of 1% maximum range (always at least a yard).

## Missing Damage Effect

-20% or -10%

If the GM agrees and the special effects support it, an attack may lack one of the normal "side effects" of its damage type. The absence of an effect that damages the target's HP, FP, or DR is worth -20% (like No Blunt Trauma); e.g., No DR Reduction, for a Corrosion Attack. Most other limitations are worth -10% (like No Knockback); e.g., No Incendiary Effect, for a Burning Attack.

## No DR Reduction

see *Missing Damage Effect*, above

## No Incendiary Effect

see *Missing Damage Effect*, above

## Only When Berserk

-20%

Your advantage applies only when in a berserk rage! The Berserk disadvantage (p. B124) is required for this limitation. You may deliberately go berserk to use the affected ability, but you are limited in your actions and may be a danger to your friends.

Only When Berserk is a special case of Accessibility, broken out as a separate modifier and given a cost befitting the drastic behavior brought on by Berserk. See *Other Accessibilities* (p. 5) for a more general case.

## Power Modifiers

Power modifiers were introduced on pp. B254-255 and expanded upon *greatly* in **GURPS Powers**. A detailed look at powers and power modifiers is beyond the scope of this book, but in *brief*, a power modifier is a limitation or (rarely) enhancement shared by every ability in a power. For example, all psionic abilities share a -10% power modifier that makes them vulnerable to countermeasures and anti-psi. Similarly, Mana-Sensitive (p. B34) is usually repurposed as the power modifier for magical abilities. Any limitation from this book or the **Basic Set** could be used as or in a power modifier, as long as the limitation could legally be applied to *every* ability in that power.

## Periodic Recharge

Variable

Your power must be sustained or renewed from an external source, which takes about a minute; if you don't have contact

with that source, it stops working. For this to be a valid limitation, access to the source has to be a major difficulty, such as not being able to carry it around with you and having to go somewhere else to recharge, *or* having to wait an hour after using your ability before recharging it. This doesn't restrict the number of times you can use your ability in the period between recharges. Likewise, using it at less than full power to "save energy" won't prolong the cycle; when your time is up, that's it.

The value of the limitation depends on the interval between recharges:

Interval	Modifier
Up to 1 minute	-80%
Up to 10 minutes	-40%
Up to 1 hour	-20%
Up to 8 hours	-10%
Up to 24 hours	-5%

An interval longer than 24 hours is not a meaningful restriction and does not count as a limitation.

## Reduced Duration

Variable

Your ability lasts for a shorter time than it should. Note that this limitation cannot be applied to advantages with a "maintained" duration, such as Mind Control (though Mind Control with the Independent enhancement would qualify).

The limitation's value depends on the reduction in duration:

Multiple	Modifier	Multiple	Modifier
1/2 duration	-5%	1/20 duration	-25%
1/3 duration	-10%	1/30 duration	-30%
1/6 duration	-15%	1/60 duration	-35%
1/10 duration	-20%		

This table can be extended from the progression shown, but the minimum duration for an ability cannot be taken below one second. For example, Affliction (Disadvantage) has a variable duration that lasts a minimum of one minute, and is thus eligible for no more than Reduced Duration, 1/60, while unmodified Affliction has a minimum duration of one second, and could not take any level of Reduced Duration.

## Required Disadvantage

Variable

You have a disadvantage such as Increased Consumption or Sleepy. If you fail to meet its requirements, you lose your ability in addition to the usual effects of missing meals, sleep, etc. Alternatively, you must indulge an Addiction to keep your ability. In either case, if you lose your ability, the only way to restore it is to satisfy the needs of your disadvantage and recover fully from any ill effects it caused you during the period where you didn't: FP or HP loss, attribute penalties, afflictions, etc.

The limitation value is numerically equivalent to the point cost of the required disadvantages; e.g., a -15-point Addiction gives a -15% Required Disadvantage limitation.

## Requires (Attribute) Roll

Variable

This limitation works like Unreliable (p. B116), except that instead of rolling against a fixed activation number to trigger your advantage, you roll against DX, IQ, HT, Will, or Per (choose one when you buy the ability). This is worth -10% for a DX, IQ, or HT roll, or -5% for a Will or Per roll. Things that temporarily modify your score do affect this roll.

For a defensive ability, roll each time the defense would mitigate an attack or a hazard – or once per minute, for constant exposure. If your roll fails, *all* future attempts to activate it (until you succeed) cost a flat 1 FP but are at no additional penalty. However, if you drop to 3 FP or less from this, your ability shuts down until *all* FP are regained.

If the attribute roll that you make can be resisted by potential subjects as a Quick Contest, add -10% to the value of this limitation. For example, Invisibility (Requires IQ vs. Per Roll, -20%) would require you to *win* a Quick Contest of your IQ vs. the Perception of anyone who might see you. This cannot be combined with Glamour (pp. 13-14) or Resistible (p. B115), and is incompatible with any trait that already allows a resistance roll. Advantages that currently necessitate an attribute roll to work may turn that roll into a Quick Contest for a flat -10%. Note this, for example, as Empathy (Requires IQ vs. Will Roll, -10%) if you must win a Quick Contest of IQ versus Will to use your Empathy.

See *Under the Hood: Active Defense* (p. 10) and below for notes on customizing this limitation further.

**Requires (Skill) Roll:** As a special effect that does not change the value, Requires (Attribute) Roll may be turned into Requires (Skill) Roll, as long as the skill in question is based on that attribute. For example, Requires Mathematics (Applied) Roll would be priced identically to Requires IQ Roll (-10%), because Mathematics (Applied) is an IQ-based skill.

Hard skills are the most balanced when used in this manner, but using an Average or Very Hard skill is not a significant enough change to warrant altering the limitation value. An Easy skill, however, reduces the size of the limitation by 5% (e.g., Requires Carpentry Roll would be a -5% limitation).

## Requires Concentrate

-15%

Your ability requires a series of Concentrate maneuvers to maintain. Taking any other maneuver (such as Attack or Move) causes it to switch off. Thus, you can only move one step per second while using it, and can't attack, aim, etc. Your ability shuts down if you lose your concentration (e.g., if attacked and you fail your Will roll).

You can't combine this with All-Out (p. 11), All-Out Concentrate (p. 11), or Requires Ready (below). Normally, only switchable advantages that would otherwise stay on without an active effort can take this limitation. A passive ability without definite activation conditions (e.g., Empathy) can also take it; if so, it requires a Concentrate maneuver to use.

**Requires Ready:** As above, except that your ability requires a series of Ready maneuvers. This is less of a limitation because foes cannot cause you to lose the ability to ready as easily as they can make you lose concentration. -10%.

## Requires Low Gravity

Variable

Your ability doesn't function in gravity fields over a certain strength. This can be appropriate for movement abilities that work better in lower gravity, such as Clinging or Flight. This is worth -5% for each 0.1G under 1G at which the ability does not work (-5% at 0.9G, to -50% if the ability works only in zero gravity).

For Flight specifically, this limitation assumes a standard-pressure atmosphere (1 atm). In other environments, multiply the gravity in which the flier can operate by the atmospheric pressure. Thus, someone who can only fly in up to 0.2G could fly in 0.3G if the atmosphere were 1.5 atm, but would be limited to 0.1G if it were 0.5 atm.

## You've Got the Touch

To convert a ranged ability or attack to a touch-based one, add Melee Attack, Reach C (-30%), from p. B112. Despite this modifier's name and its classification as an attack limitation, the ability need not be offensive; for example, you could use it to change Telesend to touch-based telepathy.

An ability that is unaffected by DR and works via touch – either inherently or because of Melee Attack – can be restricted further, by giving it *one* of the following mutually exclusive options.

**Touch-Based** (p. B109): Your ability works only if you make contact with the target's skin, or through light clothing at most. Any DR or rigid covering that prevents him from feeling your contact will stop the effect. -20%.

**Touch-Based, Reversed** (below): Your ability works only if you touch the target with your bare hand. You cannot wear even light gloves. The subject's clothing, armor, etc., have no effect, but *you* must feel the connection. -20%.

**Contact Agent** (p. B111): You must make skin-to-skin contact with the target. Your skin must touch his. -30%.

## Sense-Based, Reversed

Variable

This variant has the same value as normal Sense-Based (p. B109), but works "in reverse" – through the *user's* senses, that is, your senses. To affect your target, you must see it with your unaided eyes (Vision-Based), hear it with your own ears (Hearing-Based), touch it with your bare hand (Touch-Based), and so on. If you can't – or if you're deprived of your sense (e.g., by a blindfold for Vision-Based or heavy gloves for Touch-Based), or using a technological or paranormal intermediary – your ability doesn't work. This variation is allowed as a limitation only on an advantage that's normally unaffected by DR.

## Short-Range

-10%/level

Your ranged ability uses a worse class of range penalties than usual. Each level of Short-Range, to a maximum of three, makes the penalties one step more unfavorable on the table on p. 18.



Step	Penalty
3	-1/yard like a Regular spell (p. B239)
2	<i>Size and Speed/Range Table</i> (p. B550)
1	<i>Long-Distance Modifiers</i> (p. B241)
0	None

The ability's 1/2D and Max range don't change; use Increased Range (p. B106) or Reduced Range (p. B115) for that.

You can combine Short-Range with Reduced Range, but the total limitation value can't exceed -30%. Short-Range affects the cost of Follow-Up. It's incompatible with Guided, Homing, Long-Range (*Power-Ups 4*, p. 15), and Melee Attack.

### Irresistible Disadvantages

Temporary Disadvantage (below and p. B115) can simulate those who suffer a mental breakdown the instant they activate their gifts. To do so, select a mental disadvantage that requires a self-control roll (e.g., Berserk or Pyromania), specify a self-control number of "N/A," and price Temporary Disadvantage as if the disadvantage were worth 2.5 times its listed cost (drop fractions). Using the ability always causes the effects specified for a failed self-control roll. For example, Temporary Disadvantage, Berserk (N/A) is worth -25%, and *immediately* drives the user berserk whenever he uses his ability!

### Skill Enhancement Only

-60%

You may add this limitation to any exotic or supernatural ability that is *not* designed primarily to improve skills. For example, you could not take this on Brachiator, because the +2 to Climbing is a fundamental part of what that trait grants, but you could add it to Telekinesis because the +4 to Gambling, etc., is an add-on to that advantage's true benefit (acting at a distance). See *Abilities Enhancing Skills* (*GURPS Powers*, pp. 162-163) for a long list of appropriate traits.

Your ability's overt effects are extremely limited. You can use it to gain a bonus to a skill: +2 if the ability substitutes for fine-quality mundane equipment; +4 for miraculous aid. You can't use this gift on its own, apart from any skill, or in conjunction with an ability roll whose primary effect is to achieve a successful use of the power (such as Flight or Innate Attack). This is a good limitation for "wild talent" superheroes who are just starting to learn to use their powers.

### Specific

Variable

Specific restricts an ability that lets you interact with a material to a subset of what it normally affects. Applicable advantages include Clinging, Penetrating Vision, Super Climbing, Walk on Air, and Walk on Liquid. Advantages that already require a particular choice of materials can't be Specific.

This limitation is generally worth -40% for common materials, -60% for uncommon ones, and -80% for absurd ones – but the GM sets the precise value, which might be as little

as -10% for very common materials. Abilities that affect ferromagnetic metals – iron (including steel), nickel, and cobalt – have a -50% limitation, called "Magnetic" and not "Specific, Ferromagnetic Metals" to save space.

### Substantial Only

-10%

You have an attack or other ability that normally works on both substantial and insubstantial opponents, such as a Male-diction. However, yours works only on substantial opponents.

### Temporary Disadvantage, Shutdown

Variable

An "always on" advantage can have Temporary Disadvantage (p. B115), if – instead of affecting the entire character – the disadvantage has the potential to shut down the advantage. In this case, "temporary" means the disadvantage is irrelevant after it causes the advantage to fail. Cybernetics (p. B46) are the most common example, with Temporary Disadvantage, Shutdown, Electrical, signifying that surges can shut down the cybernetic advantages *instead of* shutting down the owner.

### Terminal Condition

Variable

This is allowed only on abilities that affect others for at least a minute. Your enemies can end your ability's ongoing effects with a simple act: kissing the subject, speaking three words, etc. If this condition isn't met, the effects have their usual duration.

This is worth -5% if the condition is arcane enough to require research; -10% if a skill roll (against Religious Ritual, Ritual Magic, Thaumatology, etc.) can discover it; or -20% if common knowledge. These values become -0% (a special effect), -5%, and -10% if the condition is difficult to arrange even if known, like a kiss *from a princess* or words spoken *by an elf*.

Abilities that can't end *until* a certain condition is met just have Extended Duration, Permanent (+150%). That enhancement already requires such a condition – you can't take Terminal Condition separately.

### Trigger, Extended

Variable

If a "use" of the advantage is defined as being longer than one minute, the value of Trigger (p. B115) drops. If each dose allows you to use the ability for 10 minutes, halve the value. For one hour, quarter it. For eight hours, divide it by 8. In all cases, round up (toward 0) to the nearest 5%.

*Example:* Tam gains Flight for an hour (1/4 value) by drinking a rare elixir (-40%); he buys it with Trigger, 1 Hour, Flight Elixir, -10%. He also acquires Absolute Direction for an hour (1/4 value) when he eats wildflowers (-10%). The fraction reduces the limitation to -2.5%, which rounds up to -0%; this is thus not a meaningful limitation.

If your trigger is unique and difficult to use in some way, compare Periodic Recharge (p. 16).

## Uncontrollable Trigger

Variable

Your ability manifests (as for Uncontrollable, p. B116) in the presence of an item or environment. Use the rarities given for Weakness (p. B161):

Rarity	Modifier
Rare	-0%
Occasional	-5%
Common	-10%
Very Common	-15%

Triple the value for harmful or destructive abilities. This limitation goes well with Unconscious Only (p. B115).

## Unsupported

-25%

You may take this limitation on some of your ST or DX, or on any transient ability: one used for brief spurts of activity. The latter class includes advantages used to attack, move, or perform physical feats – or to defend *actively* (e.g., Enhanced Dodge or any advantage with Active Defense, p. 10).

Your body has not adapted to make proper use of this ability. Every time you use it for any transient feat (but not for slow, sustained effort), you must roll against HT *afterward*. (In combat, roll at the very beginning of your next turn.) Success means no problem occurs, but a failure causes 1 point of injury; critical failure, or two failures in consecutive seconds, does 1d injury and causes any one limb you are using to be crippled.

*Example:* Kurt buys Lifting ST 10 (Unsupported). Every time he uses that extra strength to lift, grapple, or throw, he must roll against HT. However, once he's lifted a load (or if someone else helps him do so, so he doesn't even have to use his Lifting ST), he can *carry it* without making constant HT rolls.

## Usually On

Variable

You may add this only to an advantage that can normally be switched off *and* that is inconvenient if you can't easily turn it off. Your ability is on almost all the time – but you can switch it off briefly by expending 1 FP per second. This is worth -5% if the effects are social or cosmetic, -10% if they are physically

inconvenient, -30% if they are dangerous (to you), and -40% if they are absolutely crippling (e.g., Insubstantiality and Obscure).

## Visible

-10% or -20%

Your ability has a manifestation that makes it plainly obvious to everyone nearby. The effects and value depend on the underlying advantage:

- A communication, influence, information, or sensory ability that would otherwise have no visible effect – such as Clairsentience or Mind Reading – generates an attention-grabbing effect (shimmering ray, floating eye, etc.) that gives away the fact that you're affecting or observing the subject. This makes subtly impossible (if it doesn't, you don't have a limitation). -10%.

- An ability that lets you physically attack might qualify if it's normally invisible and largely unavoidable; e.g., Telekinesis. In addition to the effects above, your target gets an unpenalized defense roll to avoid the attack. -20%.

## Weaponized

Variable

This limitation can be applied only to an ability that normally works like a ranged Malediction. In other words, it must use a Quick Contest instead of an attack roll and it must be unaffected by DR. Suitable advantages include Mind Control and Mind Reading. As well, Mind Probe, Neutralize, and Possession would be valid *with the Ranged enhancement*.

This limitation turns the advantage into a normal, visible, ranged attack. The GM must decide which attack skill it will use – usually a specialty of Innate Attack. The attack uses Size and Speed/Range modifiers (p. B550) and can be dodged. If it hits, the target resists by making an unopposed roll against the appropriate attribute (e.g., Will for Neutralize). If the resistance roll fails, determine the effects as usual, using the subject's margin of failure instead of the user's margin of victory.

Weaponized is worth a base -50% if the victim's DR has no effect, or -80% if his DR adds to his resistance roll, as for an Affliction (p. B35). If the subject has a fixed penalty to his resistance roll, this adjusts the modifier value by +10% for every -1, to a maximum of -5. For example, a Neutralize ray that ignored DR and gave the subject a Will-3 roll to resist would have a net -20% limitation.



# APPENDIX

# LIMITATION

# TABLE

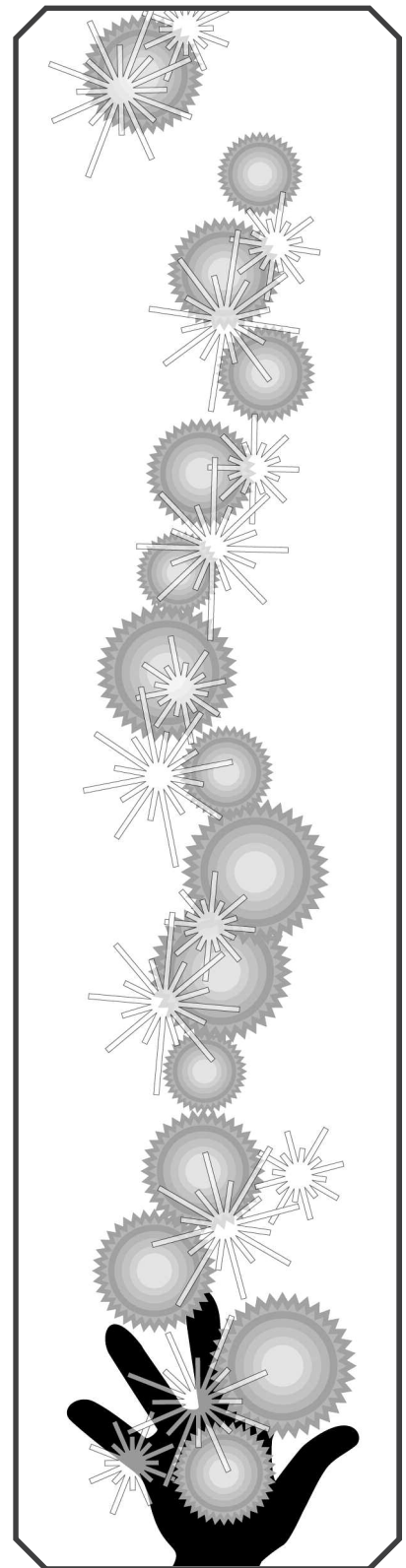
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\* A gadget limitation (pp. B116-117).



*Limitations are inspiring: they lead to thinking, so I don't mind them.*

*– Mike Nichols*

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*Style reflects one's idiosyncrasies. Your personality is apt to show more to the degree that you did not solve the problem than to the degree that you did.*

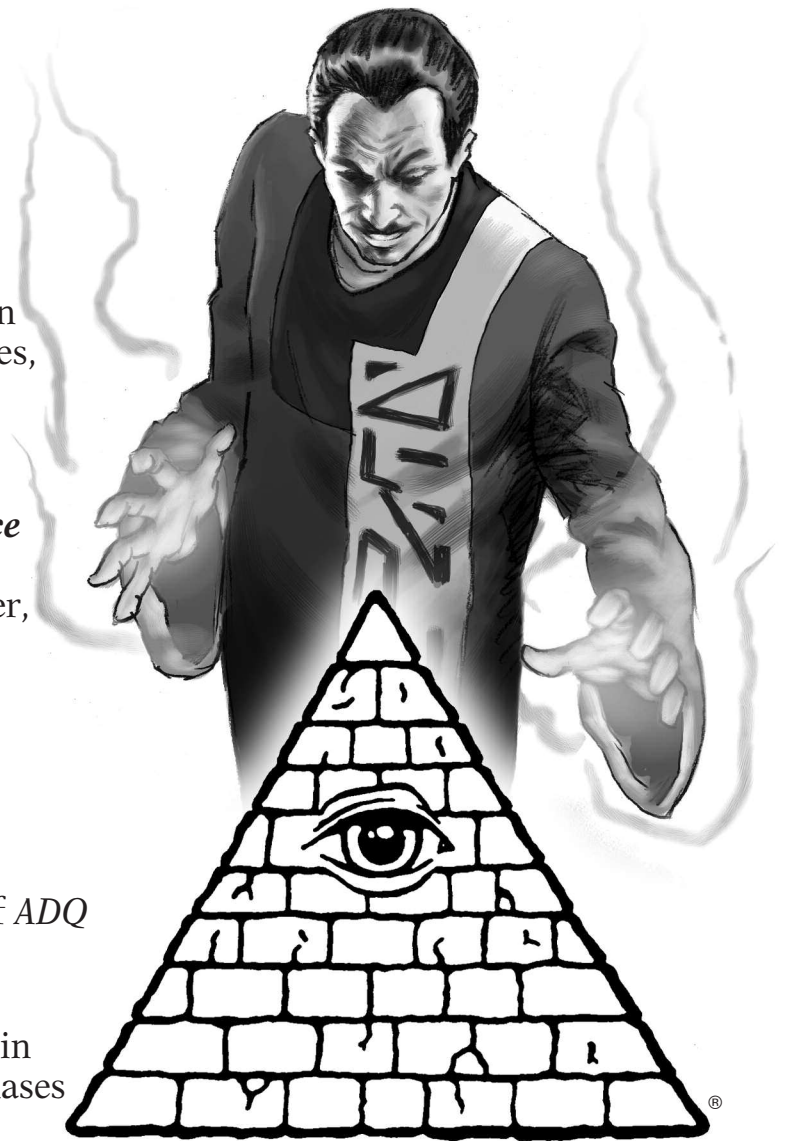
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