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SUPER-POWERED ROLEPLAYING MEETS THE REAL WORLD



SECOND EDITION • BY LOYD BLANKENSHIP

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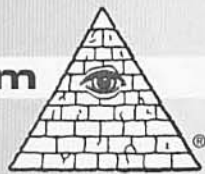


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**SUPER-POWERED ROLEPLAYING MEETS THE REAL WORLD**

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# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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# INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants to be a hero. Whether it's watching Christopher Reeve zoom through the air in red and blue tights, listening to Orson Welles' mysterious voice intoning "Only the Shadow knows . . .", or marveling at the pen of Frank Miller while clutching a flashlight beneath the covers, we all have dreamed of becoming larger-than-life, just a little bit different from ordinary men.

A super stands out from the ranks of mere mortals. He is capable of feats beyond imagining – even his problems transcend those of the mundane world. If he chooses to use his powers for good, he is revered as a hero by some, reviled as a vigilante by others. His every move will be chronicled by an overeager press, ready to make sensational headlines out of his adventures. If he uses his powers for evil, he will be universally despised and hated, and will become a target for every bounty hunter, government agency, police force, and hero group in the world.

Either way, he's a marked man.

When I started working on *GURPS Supers*, I was concerned that the inherent realism of the *GURPS* system would not lend itself to the "comic book" genre well. My worries proved to be unfounded – the realism that is the heart of the *GURPS* system provided a perfect framework to build on. The result is the first "super" roleplaying game in which the characters are more than combat machines and lists of powers.

When you design a *GURPS* super, you can determine his personality, his background and the world he exists in, not just how many dice damage he can do. *GURPS Supers* puts the third dimension – realism – into the two-dimensional world of comics.

So don your powered armor, sharpen your claws, unfurl your cape, and get ready to take off into the world of the comics – the world of *GURPS Supers!*

—Lloyd Blankenship

## SUPER SUPPORT

Although this book is all anyone needs for super-powered roleplaying, we do have a number of supplements that will add an extra dimension to *Supers* campaigns.

*GURPS International Super Teams* presents in detail the exciting alternate world of international heroes and villains that is introduced on pp. 94-107 of this book. *GURPS I.S.T.* can be used as a complete world history and background, or elements of it can be dropped into any campaign world.

*GURPS Wild Cards* and *Aces Abroad* bring George R.R. Martin's gritty world of the Wild Card virus to *Supers*. *Wild Cards* details the history and background of the world, including complete stats and descriptions for all the major characters. *Aces Abroad* sends a group of heroes on a globetrotting adventure spanning five continents. The super-agents visit Peru, Ireland, South Africa, Bali, and Australia, where the final scene takes place in the mysterious, aboriginal Dreamtime.

*GURPS Supers Adventures* presents four high-powered scenarios that can each be run in one or two game sessions. The intense action occurs in exotic locales from the edge of the solar system to the bottom of the ocean.

*GURPS Mixed Doubles* offers statistics and backgrounds for 23 pairs of superheroes and villains (and some in-betweens). Some of the pairs have obvious connections, while the members of others aren't even aware of their partner's existence.

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*. It also covers the hobby's top games – *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our Web site (below).

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request. Or download them from the Web – see below.

*Q&A.* We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

*Gamer input.* We value your comments. We will consider them not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com) for an online catalog, errata, updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on CompuServe and AOL. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: [rec.games.frp.gurps](mailto:rec.games.frp.gurps).

*GURPSnet.* Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to [majordomo@io.com](mailto:majordomo@io.com) with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to [gurpsnet.sjgames.com/](http://gurpsnet.sjgames.com/).

The *GURPS Supers* Web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/supers](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/supers).

## PAGE REFERENCES

See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a list of abbreviations for *GURPS* titles, or for the most recent list, visit our Web site at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*, Revised. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*, Revised.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lloyd Blankenship lives in Austin, TX with his wife Whitney and his three cats Daryl, Bert, and Pippin. In addition to the occasional writing stint, Blankenship works as a freelance programmer, tackling everything from Unix device drivers to multimedia sound and graphics production.

# STUPENDOUS CHARACTERS

## RISKING LIFE AND LIMB

### CHARACTER CONCEPTION

**D**ESIGNING A *SUPERS* CHARACTER IS FUN . . . AND A CHALLENGE FOR A PLAYER OR GM, DUE TO THE NEAR-INFINITE PALETTE OF ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SUPER-POWERS FROM WHICH HE CAN DRAW. A LITTLE CARE AND FORETHOUGHT CAN HELP MAKE THE JOB EASIER.

FIRST, CONSIDER THE GENERAL AREA IN WHICH THE SUPER'S POWERS OPERATE. IS HE A BRICK? A BLASTER? AN ELEMENTALIST? DECIDE ON A CENTRAL FOCUS FOR HIS ABILITIES. A SCATTERSHOT WHO CAN DO 20 DIFFERENT, UNRELATED THINGS STRETCHES EVERYONE'S SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF ("LET'S SEE, YOU WERE HIT WITH A RADIOACTIVE TRAMPOLINE AND CAN NOW BOUNCE, FLY, SLING FIRE AND LIGHTNING, SURVIVE IN A VACUUM, AND CONTROL PLANTS . . ."). SEE THE *POWER GROUPS* SIDEBAR ON P. 14 FOR IDEAS.



The most believable supers will have powers related to both their origin and each other. For example, a super with a flame-related origin might be able to throw fireballs, resist heat, and create a wall of fire. He can also fly, leaving a flaming trail behind (this is just a special effect, but it ties the Flight power to the conception). And he can blind others with a burst of flame (again, a special effect to tie the Blind power to the general flame motif). Super advantages and disadvantages should also fit the design. Our fiery super might be very vulnerable to cold, to water, or to both.

But a good enough origin story can justify any combination of powers. What do high ST and DX, precognition, super-jumping and a gadget-based binding attack have in common? Just ask Marvel's Spider-Man!

## POINT LEVEL

The number of points available to create a character is set by the power level of the campaign. If the GM is running a "realistic" campaign based on 250 character points, there is no point in trying to design a super-strong, flying hero who can shrug off bullets and destroy buildings with laser beams from his eyes – there won't be enough points. This campaign seeks to reflect what would happen if supers existed in the "real world."

But at a higher, "four-color" power level, anything goes! A campaign with starting characters at 500, 750, or even 1,000 points can have mighty battles with heroes who can throw cars and shrug off bazooka blasts.

The above point totals are *exclusive* of any Unusual Background costs (see below). So, if there is a 200-point Unusual Background assessed to be a super, then 450 or 500 points is the "realistic" level, and 750 or 1,000 points is "four-color."

In all cases, super characters should be allowed a total of 100 points of disadvantages, rather than the normal 40.

For more details on the different campaign types, see Chapter 6.

## UNUSUAL BACKGROUND

The Unusual Background advantage (see p. 11) is the most important tool that the GM has if he is trying to point-balance a super versus other *GURPS* characters. If no Unusual Background cost is assessed, then two 100-point characters – one super, one non-super – will differ wildly in ability.

In a campaign where *all* PCs are supers, this doesn't present much of a problem – as long as the GM doesn't expect his non-super NPCs to stack up to a super of equal points. In a campaign where some of the PCs are not super-powered, or where the GM plans to use supers in a non-*Supers* campaign, he should plan on assessing a heavy unusual background cost to those with access to the super abilities listed in *GURPS Supers*.

## BASIC PERSONALITY

Most supers were born as normal human beings (or at least *thought* they were normals for many years!). And most supers will have some sort of private life. Few people, even metahumans, are simple incarnations of Good or Evil.

Therefore, give some thought to the super's skills and personality *exclusive* of his powers. This will be especially important if he needs to make a living in the real world! The character's skills and personality can match his powers – for instance, an astronaut who gains the ability to fly. But a *mismatch* can be interesting, too . . . for instance, an aging, bookish professor who develops invulnerability and the strength of a dozen men!

## TYPES OF SUPER

There is absolutely no limit to the number of different characters that can be created in a *Supers* campaign. But many of the classic comic-book heroes and villains fall into a few very distinct types, and these make good starting points for character conceptions.



### THE TANK

The Tank (or Brick, or Goon) is a character who specializes in strength and toughness. Tanks are the backbone of any fighting superteam. Some Tanks have other powers (flying Tanks are common), but mostly they hit hard and bounce bullets.

A subset of this type is the Battlesuit Goon. He may have some powers of his own, or he may just be a normal in powered armor. Squads of low-powered Battlesuit Goons make good cannon-fodder.

### THE BLASTER

This is the character whose powers center around an energy or heat blast of some kind. He points at you . . . and ZAP. Blasters give a fighting superteam its ranged attacks.

### THE PSI

Psi (or Esper) is a generic term for any character whose abilities are mainly or exclusively built around psionic powers.

Psis should be built using the rules in the *GURPS Basic Set*. For a psi-intensive campaign, the GM should consider using *GURPS Psionics*.

Note that an interesting four-color campaign can be built by disallowing psi powers (or limiting them to a Power of 5 or less). High-power psis can be more formidable than the showiest brick or ray-gun; low-power ones must use subtlety.

### THE SKULKER

Skulker characters specialize in stealth. They may be invisible, insubstantial, or just trained in the Deadly Ninja Arts. Their attacks are usually quiet and secretive. A Psi Skulker is a very dangerous crossbreed.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## TYPES OF SUPER (CONTINUED)

### THE SUPER NORMAL

This is the character who is as formidable as any metahuman, yet has no special powers; he is just naturally gifted and highly trained. In a campaign where most characters are metahuman, the "mere" super normal may be at some disadvantage in combat situations because he cannot fly, throw cars, etc. However, a character built with 250 points of "normal" attributes and advantages can be a formidable detective, inventor, and bare-knuckles fighter . . . all at once. And, if the GM is assessing an Unusual Background cost to be a super (see p. 11), the super normal will have even *more* points to spend, as he doesn't need access to the abilities in *GURPS Supers*.

### THE WIZARD

The wizard is the character who can do *anything*. He may have limits of energy, potency, or range, but within those limits he can attempt anything.

Note that not all wizards use magic. The classic DC character, Green Lantern, can create almost anything with his ring, so he's a wizard.

### THE WERE

Also known as the Transformer or the Morph, this is the character who changes into something else . . . or, perhaps, several different things.

### THE COMBAT MONSTER

A generic term for any character optimized for combat, with few or no other skills. In terms of powers, he might fall into any of the other categories. What makes him a Combat Monster is that *all* his points went into combat abilities. These characters are great for slugfests, but not so good for roleplaying.

### THE GIMMICK

This character is essentially a normal, whose powers come from one marvelous device. With it, he may be a powerful Tank, Blaster, Were, and so on. Without it, he's nothing.

### THE GADGETEER

This character has access to a variety of remarkable devices and uses them with great skill. He may be a Normal who has found a crashed flying saucer . . . or a Super Normal who is a genius inventor.

A gadgeteer character must pay extra points for the Gadgeteer advantage that gives him access to his devices. It is often a good idea to take Wealth, to *pay* for the gadgets!

## ORIGIN

Or, "Just how did you get those powers?"

In some game-worlds, everyone with special powers ("metahumans") got their abilities in the same way. For instance, all metahumans in the *GURPS Wild Cards* universe obtained their powers through the Wild Card virus. The *GURPS I.S.T.* world assumes that most supers are the result of genetic mutation – they were born with it.

But in some worlds, each super has a unique origin, which will often be related to his powers. For instance, suppose Ben Franklin had been struck by lightning while conducting his famous kite experiment. He might have become a super, with the ability to glide and throw lightning bolts!

The GM will determine the different methods of acquiring super abilities when he designs the campaign background.

Players should be creative in defining their origins. Radiation leaks, ancient talismans, laboratory accidents, alien devices, glowing meteors, drug effects, bites from radioactive ducks and gerbils . . . In a world of unique origins, a player should not be allowed to have any super-ability unless he can come up with a good pseudo-scientific explanation for it.



## GOALS

What is the character's aim in life? Some characters may have goals related to their powers (to be the perfect crimefighter, or to be on the cover of *People* magazine) while others may have more ordinary goals (to put their children through school, to marry their sweethearts, to become millionaires). Characters should state their goals and work toward them. Of course, goals can change as the character grows and develops!

How does the super feel about public attention? Supers may be loved or hated, but they are rarely ignored. Does she seek the limelight, tolerate it as a necessary evil, hide from the press, or punch photographers? Will he sign autographs for children? For pretty girls? For the President? Put on shows for charity? Collect groupies? Kiss babies? Run for office?

## APPEARANCE

Think about the overall appearance of the character, including any desired "special effects" (see p. 7) of his powers.

It can be interesting to create a metahuman whose looks belie his abilities. A brawny fellow who looks like a tank might have a glass jaw. Worse, the little fellow with the bulging forehead, who seems to invite a quick Slam attack, might have ST 250 and several levels of Increased Density . . .



## CHOICE OF POWERS

Chapter 2 lists the hundreds of options available for super-powers. These can be “customized” by enhancements and limitations, giving a nearly *infinite* variety of powers from which a player can draw.

The actual choice of powers is up to the person creating the character, within the limits defined by the point level of the campaign (see p. 5).

## SPECIAL EFFECTS AND SIDE EFFECTS

The definition of a super-ability gives its important game effects: amount of damage it can do, area affected, range, and so on. The definitions do *not* try to dictate the physical manifestation of the power – this is left up to the player.

### SIDE EFFECTS

All super-abilities except those that affect the *user only* are assumed to have an *obvious* visual or audible component. This may be a flash of light, a steady green glow, a loud BANG, or whatever else the player desires. For example, a hero who can shrink herself could do so silently. But if she can use her shrinking power on others, it should have a noticeable side effect. This applies to both physical *and* mental skills (a change from the first edition rules). The side effect can be eliminated with the No Obvious Effect enhancement (p. 51).

These effects make each super unique. Two characters might have the identical ability to create a jet of flame, but the appearance would be totally different. E.g., Glare uses a heat ray that shoots from his eyes, while Krakatoa can throw gouts of molten lava. The powers, while the same in some respects, have entirely different social and environmental ramifications . . . and they *look* and *feel* different!

If a side effect is a *significant* change to the utility of the power, it should be bought as an enhancement or limitation to that particular power. For example, if Krakatoa's lava pooled into a small puddle that could burn anyone stepping into it, there wouldn't be an additional point cost. If the lava clung to anyone hit, continuing to do damage, then it would be considered an enhancement: Continuing Damage (p. 49).

### SPECIAL EFFECTS

A side effect which has no particular utility is a *special effect*. Colors, sound effects, and the like are special effects. Similarly, the origin of a ray or blast might be eyes, hand, ring, mouth, belt-buckle, navel . . .

Players should have a well-thought-out description of every ability their characters possess. It will be up to the GM to determine the results of side effects; use common sense. For instance, Glare can bounce his heat-ray off a mirror, while Krakatoa's lava would just melt the mirror. But the lava would solidify into small stones or slabs of rock, which could be used in creative ways.

The Super-Powers section (pp. 54-65) lists a number of different abilities that are simply examples of the same generic super-power with a different special effect. Frost Jet, Ice Spear, and Ice Sphere are listed separately – but a super could buy Frost Jet with the Impaling enhancement (p. 50) and then use it to duplicate all three attacks by choosing when to use the Impaling enhancement and when to ignore it (see *Turning Enhancements On and Off*, p. 32). The “sphere” is just a special effect of the Frost Jet, since they do identical damage.

## CHARACTER DESIGN

The best way to create a human super-character is to start by creating a 100-point “normal.” This is an ordinary person from the campaign world, with

## NAMES

Where would a comic-book super be without his hero name? He may be plain old Morris Schwartz . . . but when he puts on his mask, he becomes the Orange Avenger, and criminals tremble. Use of a hero name doesn't imply that the hero has a secret identity; after all, many rock and film stars use stage names, but their real identities are well known.

Your super-name tells the public – and other supers – what you want them to think of you. Often, coming up with a good name can be the key to a whole character story.

There are several ways to create a super-name:

**Goals.** The super's public name can reflect his aims and ambitions: the Orange Avenger, Eco-Guardian, the Hacker.

**Powers.** Rebel Yell has sonic powers, Lightsaber fires a laser beam, Flamin' Jane has heat and flame powers.

**Theme or Costume.** The White Fox wears a white costume with a fox-mask. Her name and costume don't really hint at her abilities; she just likes foxes. The Punster's trademark is hideous punslinging, though his metahuman abilities are significant. Mount Fuji is huge, immovable, and Japanese. Mythology is a good source for such names.

**Side effects or special effects.** Purple Haze creates a violet glow when he uses his real powers (whatever they are).

**“It just sounded neat.”** Falchion, Karma, Coup de Grace, Knickknack, and so on. The name may reflect something about the super's goals or methods, but it was chosen mainly because it *sounded* like a super-name.

**No hero name:** In a world where supers are popular, a metahuman might operate under his own name, especially if it is short and easy to remember.

### DUPLICATE NAMES

Comic books have been around for a long time. It seems that all the good names might have been taken!

Not so. There's plenty of room for originality. And don't worry if you find you've repeated a name that was used in an obscure 1950s book . . . or even in a game supplement somewhere. As long as you don't duplicate a name so well-known that your fellow players get confused, you should be all right.



## COSTUMES

So now you're a super. What are you going to wear?

The comic-book hero always has a bright-colored, skin-tight costume. The same goes for the heroine . . . but hers is usually slit down to the navel. Capes, gloves, high boots, cowls . . . and miraculously, the costume never gets torn up.

In a four-color campaign, you can design any sort of costume you want — the gaudier the better. In such a world, the main purpose of the costume is to instantly identify its wearer from a distance. The hood or mask hides a secret identity, of course.

In a realistic campaign, there are other alternatives. Bright colors make you an easier target. Capes can be grabbed; cowls can slip and cover your eyes. Some metahumans may simply wear ordinary street clothing; others will affect punk, high-fashion, or other interesting outfits. Military supers will simply wear their uniforms. Civilian combat monsters might wear fatigues, ninja outfits, jumpsuits, or other cheap, practical clothes.

For more ideas, see pp. 22-23.

### THE COSTUME AS A GADGET

It is possible for some of a super's powers to come directly from his costume. The most obvious way to do this, of course, is to have it serve as armor. This will reduce the point cost of the defense; use the *Super-Equipment* rules in Chapter 3. For instance, a mirrored costume could defend against energy attacks.

The costume is considered Easily Accessible. Whether it is Breakable or Repairable is entirely up to the creator. Targeting it would depend on the costume: Darkshell's battlesuit is hit whenever Darkshell is hit, but Flamin' Jane's skimpy outfit would be targeted at -3.

Even in a realistic campaign, though, a costume can provide some defense. This need not cost character points! If a metahuman has no special toughness or DR, an ordinary Kevlar vest will give him a much better chance of surviving gunfire. Flying characters, especially, are likely to become targets; a Hardcorps vest can make a life-or-death difference.

### THE COSTUME ADVANTAGE

Many super-abilities, such as Fire powers, Stretching, and Tunneling, will destroy clothing instantly . . . unless the clothing is very special. In a four-color campaign, a super can take the Costume advantage (see p. 38), to get an outfit that will survive normal use of the wearer's powers. In a realistic campaign, such costumes are unavailable, and Flamin' Jane will have a modesty problem when she turns her flames off. (A gadget-type costume, such as a battlesuit, does not require this advantage.)

metahuman abilities and only 40 points in disadvantages. Define this character fully, with appropriate skills, quirks, and life history.

After this "base" character is created, points can then be spent on super abilities, as described in Chapter 2, and extra disadvantages can be added (if desired) to bring the disadvantage total up to 100 points. These new disadvantages should all be related to the super's origin or powers — enemies, unusual looks, delusions, etc. The Unusual Background cost (if any; see p. 11) should be assessed at this point.

Some costs and skill levels will change as attributes are increased with the extra "super" points, but this method will produce a well-rounded character who happens to have super talents, rather than a flying tank with one or two normal skills.

Androids, aliens, and other nonhuman characters, of course, do not start with a normal background, and must be "built" from scratch. Note that unusual body parts (see the *Multiple Limbs* chapter) are especially appropriate for such beings. See *GURPS Fantasy Folk* for more information on designing nonhuman races.

## WEALTH AND STATUS

Starting wealth for a super-character depends entirely on the general world background (see p. B16). Likewise, most possessions are treated just as for normal characters. It can be interesting to create either dirt-poor heroes or filthy rich ones. *Great wealth makes even a "normal" person super-powerful in many ways!* Gadgeteers, in particular, need a lot of money to pay for their devices; see the *Gadgeteering* chapter.

### STATUS OF METAHUMANS

The status of metahumans is a campaign decision. Characters built on a "normal" template will have their own positions in human society, but just being a super can change status in one of several ways. Keep in mind that such a status modifier will affect supers *as a class*, as opposed to Reputation, which can be taken by individuals. Therefore, if the GM defines a special status for supers, all super PCs *must* take this status. Possibilities include:



*Supers are the ruling class.* Mere possession of metahuman powers makes you an aristocrat. No super may have a status below (for instance) 2.

*Supers are idolized.* Rather than buying this as status *per se*, all super-characters must buy at least a +2 reaction.

*Supers are taken for granted.* This will not happen unless supers are very common. But in this case, normals will react only to a super's specific use of metahuman powers or his individual Reputation, and not to the bare fact that he's a super.

*Supers are feared or hated.* This may be treated either as a negative reaction or as a ceiling on the Status any known super may have. If it is a reaction modifier, it is a disadvantage that applies equally to all supers.

In the cases where supers have automatic disadvantages, these *do* count toward the 100-point disadvantage total.

## REPUTATION

(SEE P. B17)

If a super-character is created with an ongoing history as a super, it is appropriate to take a reputation. "New" supers should not take a reputation (at least, not in their super-identities) when they are first created.

However, an important part of the super-campaign lies in the *development* of reputations. This is especially true for vigilantes, costumed heroes, and super-criminals. The GM should pay attention to the *true* behavior of each character, and modify NPC reactions accordingly. A villain who behaves nobly and interrupts his crimes to rescue innocents will improve his reputation. A so-called "hero" who gets into property-destroying super-brawls will earn a negative reaction modifier.

There are two ways for the GM to handle this; the choice is a matter of personal style. The GM may tell the player what his current reaction bonuses and penalties are, and put them on the character sheet. Positive reactions are advantages, which must be bought with character points. Negative reactions are disadvantages, which give no bonus points but just lower the character's value.

Alternatively, the GM may just keep his own reaction notes. The point value of characters will not be affected, and players will just have to deduce how the public feels about them from the way the NPCs behave! Requests for autographs are a good sign. On the other hand, if people run and scream when Wonder Man appears, perhaps that old public image needs a little work.

## ATTRIBUTES

If the PC is going to have superhuman ST, the player should consider the Enhanced ST advantage (p. 39). Attributes other than ST are bought normally. The GM may put a limit on allowed DX or IQ (see the *Super Campaigns* chapter). A super-high DX is playable, but may not be a good use of points; skills are cheaper. A super-high IQ is hard to roleplay! Would a creature of IQ 30 (three times as smart as a normal human) even bother with human pursuits?

Remember that when calculating a skill default from an attribute, attributes higher than 20 count as only 20!

## ADVANTAGES

Many "normal" advantages are common and important in the *Supers* genre. For instance, sense enhancements, such as Alertness, Acute Senses, Peripheral Vision, and Night Vision, are very valuable for a "realistic" super who doesn't have actual super-senses.

Likewise, mental abilities like Absolute Direction, Absolute Timing, and Mathematical Ability are useful for some character types, and cheap compared to

## NON-SUPER PCS IN A SUPER CAMPAIGN

Viable "non-super" player characters can take part in a *Supers* campaign, if the players find this interesting. There are two ways to approach this. In either case, the GM should assess a high Unusual Background cost to "real" super-characters if it is important to him to have, for instance, all 250-point characters equally powerful. If this is not important to the GM or players, don't worry about it.

### SUPER NORMALS

A "super normal" is a person who has no metahuman skills, but is so highly trained and so endowed with natural gifts that he (or she!) can deal on equal terms with some supers. Fictional examples include Batman, Doc Savage, the Badger, Daredevil, and most of the heroes from *Watchmen*. In fact, it would be possible to run a whole "super normals" campaign.

### NORMALS

An ordinary normal, built on 100 points, can make an interesting PC in an otherwise super-powerful campaign. The important question to answer when such a character is created is "Why would this person be sought out, or even tolerated, in the midst of super-adventures and super-battles?" Once that question is answered, the stage is set for interesting interactions with the supers and their foes . . . and some challenging roleplaying. Some possibilities:

A journalist, whose stories and photos feed the super-egos or bring in donations.

The inventor of the super-gadgets used by other PCs.

A martial-artist bodyguard to a metahuman group, in a campaign where the only metahuman powers are nonviolent psi abilities.

A skilled researcher or spy on an important mission; the supers are *his* bodyguards.

A trained physician or EMT, for a group of supers who don't know First Aid.

The dedicated and street-smart chauffeur/secretary/PR expert/fixer to a team of super-troubleshooters.

The sleazy business manager of a team of naive supers.



## PC SUPER-TEAMS

In a one-shot adventure, the PCs can play a diverse group of supers who just happened to get involved in the situation. But in a continuing *Supers* campaign, the players will usually want to form their characters into a "super-team."

The interaction and internal conflicts within a team can lead to great roleplaying opportunities. If some members Cannot Kill, while others have no such inhibition, their confrontations with super-opponents may become even more exciting.

The super-team also gives metahumans a way to interact with society. And the police (who need all the help they can get) are happy to have a central number to call when the meta-villains hit town.

### TEAM CREATION AND ORIGINS

When the characters are first created, the GM should give the players hints about the type of campaign he wants to set up. In some cases, team members should have similar powers (for instance, a military campaign needs combat monsters). In other cases, complimentary powers will be more interesting: one or two fliers, one or two combat monsters, one or two skulkers, one or two psis.

If the game-world allows, the team can have a common origin: they were all exposed to the same mysterious energy, bitten by the same radioactive squid, ate the same Pizza from Dimension X, or whatever.

Or the team can be brought together by similar origins: the All-Mutant team, the Ex-Criminal team, the Americans-In-Europe team.

### CHOOSING A NAME

Every super-team needs a name! Pick one that will identify your members and goals, be easy to say, and look good in the newspapers.

### TEAM OBJECTIVE

Presumably, every super-team has a reason for being. There are many possibilities other than just To Fight Crime! They include:

*To commit crimes* (see p. 90).

*Military strike forces.*

*Espionage or counterespionage* – possibly political, possibly corporate.

*To further some cause* – e.g. the Green Guardians, dedicated to preservation of wildlife, especially whales, by any means that does not threaten human life.

*To help other supers in trouble.*

*To earn money*, as troubleshooters and Impossible Jobs experts.

*Performers*, probably, but not necessarily, utilizing their super-abilities. A group might be a rock band that just happened to be made up of metahumans, for instance!

*Continued on next page . . .*

most super powers! Eidetic Memory is good for the universal expert or gadgeteer type of hero (see sidebar, p. 6). Animal Empathy is essential for a beastmaster!

Various "normal" physical advantages can be very desirable. In fact, with 250 points in such advantages, a "super-normal" can be built. This is a character who has no metahuman powers, but can hold his own against supers anyway!

High Pain Threshold is almost a must for a super-brawler. Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, and Rapid Healing are equally valuable, although, of course, Regeneration (p. 44) is superior to Rapid Healing. Longevity and Immunity to Disease are appropriate for a physically strong or tough super.

And some advantages take on a whole new dimension in a *Supers* game:

### ANIMAL EMPATHY

(SEE P. B19)

A character with the Animal Empathy advantage has a +1 bonus to the super-skills Sense Animal and Control Animal.

### ALLIES

(SEE P. B23)

Allies are NPCs who are loyal companions. In the *Supers* genre, of course, the ally is usually a "sidekick." Cost of an Ally is 15 points for an ally of 151-200 character points, plus another 5 points for every 50 character points the ally has. Note that if an ally has his own metahuman powers, he must pay the cost for an Unusual Background (p. 11). Even if the GM is not assessing an Unusual Background cost to the PCs for having metahuman powers, it should be added in to the point cost of the ally.

Modify the Ally's cost for frequency of appearance as per p. B23.

It is interesting – and very faithful to the genre – to create an ally whose name and powers echo (or complement) the theme of the PC.

### LEGAL ENFORCEMENT POWERS

(SEE P. B21)

Without some degree of legal enforcement powers, a super-crimefighter is nothing but a vigilante . . . technically, as much of a criminal as the people he arrests. The GM should play up this dilemma whenever a player insists that his character is totally independent. See *Supers and the Law*, p. 95.

On the other hand, most Legal Enforcement Powers will carry a Duty of some kind! A Secret Service super will have 10 points of Legal Enforcement Powers, but little free time.

The GM may create special organizations for crimefighters. The United Nations' International Super Teams, from *GURPS I.S.T.*, are an example. Or supers with good reputations may be given Q-clearance or similar "Get Out of Jail Free" cards.

If a crimefighter has no official status, but is tolerated by the police as long as he cooperates with them and doesn't cause unreasonable property damage, this is the equivalent of "ordinary policeman" Legal Enforcement Power, and costs 5 points. In some worlds, the laws automatically give costumed vigilantes this much power. Otherwise, to have this "informal" legal status, the super should either have an excellent reputation or operate in a small town.

### LONGEVITY

(SEE P. B21)

This is identical to the Longevity advantage in the *GURPS Basic Set*. Campaigns rarely last long enough for age to become a significant factor – Longevity is mostly an interesting piece of character background. For example, a super might have been born before the Civil War, and spent his lifetime fighting crime (everything from an Old West lawman, hiding his powers, to a modern IST member). He'd have an unusual range of skills, and probably some old-fashioned attitudes.

Obviously, an older character will be able to devote more points to skills than a younger character – if the GM wishes to limit the *starting* age of a character with Longevity, he should feel free to do so.

## LUCK

(SEE P. B21)

Super-crimefighters with Luck, or even Extraordinary Luck, are routine in the comics. In fact, one suspects that most comic heroes wouldn't last an hour without it.

The GM who enjoys a swashbuckling play style may add the further level of *Ridiculous* Luck, usable every 10 minutes, for 60 points. Finally, the GM may allow *Super* Luck. This allows the player to *dictate* the result of any one die roll made by his character (or by the GM, for his character) once per hour of playing time. Wholly impossible attempts still cannot succeed, but the player can choose any result which would be possible, no matter how unlikely, on a single normal die roll. This costs 100 points.

Both Ridiculous and Super Luck should be considered super-abilities, and require the purchase of an Unusual Background where applicable. A character can take Super Luck *and* any degree of "normal" luck, but no one can take Super Luck twice!

## MAGICAL APTITUDE AND MAGIC RESISTANCE

(SEE P. B21)

Depending on the way the GM wishes to handle magic in the campaign, these advantages may be valuable or worthless. As methods of magic in a *Supers* campaign can vary widely, players should check with the GM before creating a magic-using or magic-resistant character. See sidebar, p. 17, for more information.

## UNUSUAL BACKGROUND

This advantage is relative in a *Supers* campaign. Depending on the world, being an incredibly strong mutant with teleportation powers could be considered very unusual, slightly odd, or perfectly ordinary.

If meta-powers are unknown or very unusual, even a relatively trivial power like Shrinking could make its owner powerful (or at least wealthy). Thus, this advantage is used to "balance" the super-character against the "normal" character. If this is not a concern, the GM may simply ignore Unusual Background. On the other hand, if a few PCs have super-abilities in a non-*Supers* campaign, this advantage is necessary for game balance.

Suggested costs for Unusual Background would be:

- ☛ Super-powers are incredibly rare (the PCs are the only supers on the planet): 250 points.
- ☛ Super-powers are very rare (the PCs and one or two other groups are the only supers on the planet): 200 points.
- ☛ Super-powers are rare (only a small handful of super groups in each country): 150 points.
- ☛ Super-powers are widespread (almost all large cities have a super or two): 100 points.
- ☛ Super-powers are common (it is not unusual to see a super or two while grocery shopping): 50 points.
- ☛ Super-powers are very common (everybody knows a super): 25 points.
- ☛ Everybody has super-powers: no points.

Note that different types of super-powers can have different costs. For instance, telepathy-based abilities might be rare in a world where other super-powers were widespread.

## PC SUPER-TEAMS (CONTINUED)

### TEAM RULES

Many teams will adopt certain rules or codes of conduct. These can cover damage to private property; who gives the orders in and out of combat; disposition of the spoils of war (or loot); use of team property; and so on. See *Code of Honor*, p. 15.

### TEAM PROPERTY

As a super-team develops, it will acquire property: transportation (supers shouldn't have to ride the bus to crime sites); means of secure communications; a headquarters (possibly with a museum commemorating past triumphs); a team bank account; and so on.



### NPC TEAM MEMBERS

Depending on team makeup, the GM may want to create one or two NPCs as extra members of the super-team. These NPCs can serve several purposes:

*Extra firepower*, especially if the team is small.

*Extra talents*, providing useful abilities that no PC has. It's always a good idea to have a healer around, for instance.

*A mouthpiece for the GM*, for situations where a hint is needed in order to get an adventure back on track.

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## PC SUPER-TEAMS (CONTINUED)

### TEAM TACTICS

A skilled team of super-warriors will develop various tactics to take advantage of members' abilities (and to keep from zapping each other accidentally).

### TEAM PATRON

If the team has a powerful sponsor, that sponsor should be taken as a Patron by each team member. The GM rolls only once per session to see if the Patron appears. A super-team is, itself, a very powerful entity. A meaningful Patron for such a group might be a government, a mega-corporation, an ultra-powerful super, or an extradimensional creature or godling.

### TEAM ENEMIES

If the team, as a group, has any particular foes, they may be taken as team Enemies. The point value counts normally for each PC, but the GM rolls only once per session to see if they appear. This is usually preferable to defining separate Enemies for several different team members.

### DEPENDENTS AND ALLIES

The team may also have group Dependents and Allies. Again, their point values count for each PC, but the GM rolls only once per session to see if they appear. Logical team Dependents would include the "normal" child who is team mascot; team employees (such as the pilot of their plane); a news reporter covering the team; and the young super-in-training who accompanies the team.



## NEW ADVANTAGES

### ALTERNATE IDENTITY

5 OR 5 POINTS PER IDENTITY

You have an extra identity, which to all appearances is legally-established. Your fingerprints (and retina prints, if this is a common method of ID) are registered under two different names, you have two sets of licenses, passports, birth certificates, etc. This can be extremely useful for anyone involved in illegal activities, or for anyone trying to conceal a super identity. This advantage may be purchased as many times as desired – each gives another set of papers.

While the new identity may include credit cards and bank accounts, all money in these accounts must be supplied from the "real" character's bank account – it isn't included in the package.

If a law enforcement agency attempts to identify you from your prints, with no clues as to your name, there is an equal chance for each of your identities to come up. The search will stop at that point unless they have reason to believe you are a ringer. If the search continues, the second identity will, of course, surface, and you will be unmasked. At that point, once the agency determines who you *really* are, the alternate identity(s) are lost.

Alternate identities are illegal for ordinary people. If you are caught, you will face a stiff fine and possibly a jail sentence. An alternate identity can also be a "secret" identity (see sidebar, p. 20), but it doesn't have to be!

**Legal Alternate Identities:** Certain PCs might have access to an Alternate Identity *legally*. An undercover FBI agent, for example, could have a complete set of papers, history, etc. in a fake name. Or a super might have government help in creating a secret identity! A character must have at least 10 points of Legal Enforcement Powers (p. B21) to have a legal identity such as this – but the point cost of the Alternate Identity drops from 15 to 5 points. If a super has official permission to conceal his original name (to protect his family, etc.) and to hold property, etc., in his "super" name, that is a Legal Alternate Identity combined with a Secret Identity (his real name is hidden). See sidebar, p. 20.

**"Weak" Identities:** In many countries, including the U.S., it is legal to use false names for privacy, as long as you do not attempt to defraud or interfere with "public records." You can usually rent an apartment as "Mr. Smith," paying cash, without problems. But you can't get a driver's license, etc., legally. This sort of weak identity is worth no points; see *Secret Identity*, p. 20.

### CONTACTS

VARIABLE

A Contact is an NPC, like an Ally or a Patron. However, the Contact only provides *information*. Contacts may be anyone from a wino in the right gutter to the Chief of State of a country, depending on the character's background. The Contact has access to information, and he is already known to react favorably to the character. The Contact may want a price, in cash or favors, for the information. The Contact is always played and controlled by the GM and the nature of the price must be set by the GM.

The GM may assume that a Contact is, in general, well-disposed toward the PC. However, the Contact is *not* an Ally or Patron, and is no more likely to give special help than any other generally friendly NPC!

A Contact doesn't have to be created when the PC is first developed. Contacts may be added later. When appropriate, the GM can turn an existing NPC into a Contact for one or more players, possibly in lieu of character points for the adventure in which the Contact was developed and encountered.

Whatever the case, the Contact can provide information only about his own area of expertise. The technician at the forensics lab probably has no

information about currency transfers, and the VP of the local Bank of America branch probably can't do a ballistics comparison. The GM assigns a skill (Streetwise for a minor criminal, Forensics for a lab tech, etc.) to the Contact. All attempts to get information from him require a secret roll by the GM against the Contact's "effective" skill. Note that the effective skill is not necessarily the NPC's *actual* skill; the actual skill can be set by the GM if the NPC comes into regular play. For instance, the president of a local steel mill might actually have business-related skills of 16-18, but he has an *effective* skill of 21, making him worth 20 points, because he himself has good connections!

Point values for Contacts are based on the type of information and its effective skill, modified by the frequency with which they can provide information and the reliability of the information. Importance of information is relative and the list of possible Contacts is virtually endless; a few are listed below as a guide to help the GM determine value.

#### TYPE OF INFORMATION

**Street Contacts.** These are minor criminals, derelicts, street thugs, gang members, small-time fences, and other streetwise NPCs who provide information on illicit activities, local criminal gossip, upcoming crimes, and so forth. Base cost is 1 point for "unconnected" Contacts (not part of the local criminal organization; Streetwise-12) and 2 points for "connected" Contacts (Streetwise-15). If the Contact is a major figure in a criminal organization (the Don, Clan Chief, or member of the "inner circle" of the family; Streetwise-21), the cost doubles to 4 points.

**Business Contacts.** Executives, business owners, secretaries – even the mail room flunky – can provide information on businesses and business dealings. Base cost depends on how much the contact can be expected to know: 1 point for a mail boy or typist (effective skill 12), 2 points for the president's secretary (effective skill 15), 3 points for an accountant (effective skill 18) or 4 points for the president or chairman of the board (effective skill 21).

**Police Contacts.** This includes anyone connected with law enforcement and criminal investigations: beat cops, corporate security, government agents, forensics specialists, coroners, etc. Cost depends on access to information or services. Beat cops and regular private security officers are 1 point (effective skill 12); detectives, federal agents, or record clerks are 2 points (effective skill 15); administrators (lieutenants, captains, Special Agents in Charge, Head of Departmental Security, etc.) are 3 points (effective skill of 18) and senior officers (sheriffs, chiefs of police, District Superintendents, Security Chiefs, etc.) are 4 points (effective skill 21).

#### FREQUENCY OF ASSISTANCE

*Frequency* refers to the chance that the Contact can be found when needed. When creating the character, the player must define the way the Contact is normally contacted! Regardless of the chosen frequency, a Contact cannot be reached if the PCs could not reasonably speak to him. No Contact may be used more than once per day, even if several PCs share the same Contact. Multiple questions may be asked each day, at a cumulative -2 for each question after the first.

*Available almost all of the time* (roll of 15 or less): triple cost.

*Available quite often* (roll of 12 or less): double cost.

*Available fairly often* (roll of 9 or less): listed cost.

*Available rarely* (roll of 6 or less): half cost (round up).

During the adventure, if a PC wants to talk with his Contact, the GM rolls against the availability number for that Contact. A failed roll means the Contact is busy or cannot be located that day. If the Contact *is* available, then the GM



## YOUNG URBAN METAHUMAN PROFESSIONALS

The traditional comic book super would never dream of making a buck off his powers – they're reserved for the good of humanity. Mr. Mega might be able to juggle planets, but he still makes his living as the minimum-wage copy boy for the *National Entendre*.

For all its venerable tradition, this convention is not graven in stone, and it could be fun to play a super whose abilities are used not only to save the world, but also to pay the bills.

The easiest super-jobs to play, for both the player and the GM, are those which lead naturally into frequent adventures – bodyguard, spy, detective, mercenary. Other professions, while not so thrilling, are equally obvious. Most technos are engineers or research scientists long before they ever take up crimefighting.

Even if they lack technical training, supers with the ability to survive comfortably in elements inimical to humans – space, or the ocean trenches – will find they're able to practically name their own price as research assistants, and as point men for rescue teams when human researchers get into a jam. See *Supertemps*, p. 101.

Metahumans are natural entertainers, from the pop singer who uses emotion control to spread good (or bad) vibes throughout the audience, to the stage magician whose most amazing tricks *aren't* illusions. And, of course, there's always super-class professional wrestling!

A little imagination can suggest all kinds of rewarding careers for different sorts of supers. For example, paradoxical as it may seem, a flaming super would make an excellent forest ranger. He could start minutely controlled counter-fires or quick-sear firebreaks, or use Neutralize Fire to snuff wildfires.

Of course, powers *can* be a liability for the job-hunting super. Professional sports (with the exception of the above-mentioned wrestling) would likely find little use for metahumans, and certain labor unions would be most unreceptive to a brick or telekinetic who could replace a whole construction crew.

## POWER GROUPS

Some players and GMs might regret the loss of the first-edition rules that classify all super-powers neatly into Power Groups. Power Groups are certainly useful tools for ensuring a unified character design (see p. 4), and some GMs will prefer to use them.

The first decision to make is "what constitutes a Power Group?" Simply put, a Power Group is an interrelated set of super-powers that also relate to the origin of the super. There are a couple of different methods for deciding if something fits into a Power Group or not – but remember, the GM's decision is law!



### BLAST FROM THE PAST

GMs who own *Supers, First Edition*, may simply wish to say "use the Power Groups as listed." This has the advantage of being pregenerated (which will silence the more argumentative players), but it's not very flexible. Still, the first edition rules provide a very good starting point for building your own custom Power Groups.

To this end, we've provided a listing of various Power Groups (see p. 25) from the first edition.

### CHARACTER STORY

Using this method, the onus of proving a Power Group falls onto the player. He must be prepared to fully justify the inclusion of each super-power into his Power Group. This encourages creativity on the part of the player (not to mention a few Fast-Talk rolls!). It also allows more flexibility in Power Group design.

Once the GM and player have agreed that yes, these super-powers do in fact constitute a Power Group, there are several options available to reward the good character conception (or alternatively, punish *bad* conceptions). The GM should choose one he likes (or modify one to suit him), and make sure that *all* characters (PCs and NPCs alike) use it.

*Continued on next page . . .*

must roll against the Contact's effective skill for each general piece of information the PC requests. A Contact can *never* supply information outside his particular area of knowledge. Use common sense. Likewise, the GM *must not* allow a Contact to give information that short-circuits the adventure or part of it!

If a PC gets a critical failure when trying to reach his Contact, that Contact can't be reached during that entire *adventure*.

### RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION

Contacts are not guaranteed to know anything useful, and are not guaranteed to be truthful. Use the following modifiers (cumulative with frequency modifiers).

*Completely reliable:* Even on a critical failure, the worst response will be "I don't know." On an ordinary failure he can find information in 1d days. Triple cost.

*Usually reliable:* On a critical failure the Contact will lie; on any other failure he "doesn't know now but check back in 1d days." Roll again at that time; a failure then means he can't find out at all. Double cost.

*Somewhat reliable:* On a failure the Contact doesn't know and can't find out; on a critical failure he will lie; on a natural 18 he will let the opposition or authorities (whichever is appropriate) know who is asking questions. Listed cost.

*Unreliable:* Reduce effective skill by 2. On any failure he will lie; on a critical failure he will notify the enemy. Half cost (round up).

### MONEY TALKS

Bribery, whether cash or favors, motivates the Contact and increases his *reliability level*. Once reliability reaches "usually reliable," further levels of increase go to effective skill; bribery cannot make anyone totally reliable!

A cash bribe should be about equivalent to one day's income for a +1 bonus, one week's income for +2, one month's for +3, and one year's for +4. Favors should be of equivalent worth. The favor should always be something that the character actually performs in the game. The GM must maintain proper role-playing – a diplomat might be insulted by a cash bribe, but welcome an introduction into the right social circle.

### FEARLESSNESS

**2 POINTS/LEVEL**

Fearlessness is a special case of Strong Will (p. B23) that only applies to Fright Checks and attempts to intimidate (see p. 24).

*Example:* A PC has 2 levels of Strong Will and 3 levels of Fearlessness with an IQ of 13. He would make Will rolls at 15, and Fright Checks at 18. Any attempt to intimidate him would be at a -3 – if the intimidation is handled as a Contest of Wills, both his Will and Fearlessness would help him.

### GADGETEER

**25 POINTS**

You are a "natural" inventor. You can modify existing equipment, and given enough time and money, create entirely new gadgets. This advantage allows you to use the gadgeteering rules in chapter 3. This is not necessarily a super-advantage; it can be taken by other characters, with the GM's permission. It can also be explained by Unusual Background (e.g., "I'm from the year 3000, and I learned to build these in first grade.")

### UNFAZEABLE

**15 POINTS**

Nothing surprises you – at least, nothing that's not obviously a threat. The world is full of strange things, and as long as they don't bother you, you don't bother them. You are exempt from Fright Checks, and almost no reaction modifiers affect you, either way. You treat strangers with distant courtesy, no matter



how strange they are, as long as they're well-behaved. You will have the normal reaction penalty toward anyone who does something rude or rowdy, but you will remain civil even if you are forced to violence.

This advantage is incompatible with all phobias. A character with this advantage is not emotionless – he just never displays strong feelings. The stereotypical Maine Yankee or English butler has this advantage. E.g., two fellows in rocking chairs on the porch of a general store:

*Ed: "What'd that little feller with them orange tentacles on his head want?"*

*Burt: "Just another lost summer tourist. Took a wrong turn at Mars." (Looks up at the sky.) "Looks like it's gonna rain tomorra."*

*Ed: "Ayuh. Looks like."*

This advantage must be roleplayed fully, or the GM can declare that it has been lost. In a campaign where Fright Checks are an hourly occurrence, the GM can charge 20 or more points, or disallow the advantage.

## DISADVANTAGES

Supers tend to have more complicated lives than their mundane brothers. For this reason, a starting *Supers* character can have up to 100 points in Disadvantages instead of the normal 40 points, plus the usual five quirks.

The genre is full of heroes who overcome physical disadvantages – even serious ones. If a character has the Transformation advantage, the GM should allow only  $\frac{1}{2}$  point value for physical disadvantages which apply to the "normal" form.

Mental disadvantages shouldn't be ignored . . . villains are expected to be a little bit mad, and a mentally-disturbed *hero* can lead to interesting roleplaying.

Disadvantages that are especially significant in a *Supers* game:

### CODE OF HONOR SEE P. B31

Almost all heroic supers (and some villains) have a personal Code of Honor of some type. This is a disadvantage because it limits one's behavior. The Gentleman's Code of Honor is very appropriate for a "good guy." Three special Codes of Honor for supers are described below; any of these could be taken separately or combined with the Gentleman's Code. Of course, all these are appropriate for non-powered characters, too!

Any super who is widely known to follow such a code will get a +1 reaction in most cases – even from foes. For instance, the police will treat a captured criminal better if they know he always pulled his punches when he hit normals!

*Hero's Code of Honor:* This is like the Honesty disadvantage (p. B33), but more so. You must use your utmost efforts to uphold the law at all times. Not only will you intervene to stop any criminal actions you notice; you will also go out of your way to find crime to stop! You must protect anyone weaker than yourself. *-15 points.*

*Villain's Code of Honor:* This code is appropriate for anyone who is "criminal but not evil." You will never use your powers to cause physical harm, unless you are attacked first. You will not steal from the poor and helpless. *-10 points.* This can be combined with some type of Pacifism (see p. B35 and below) for a very ethical criminal.

## POWER GROUPS (CONTINUED)

### THE CARROT SYSTEM

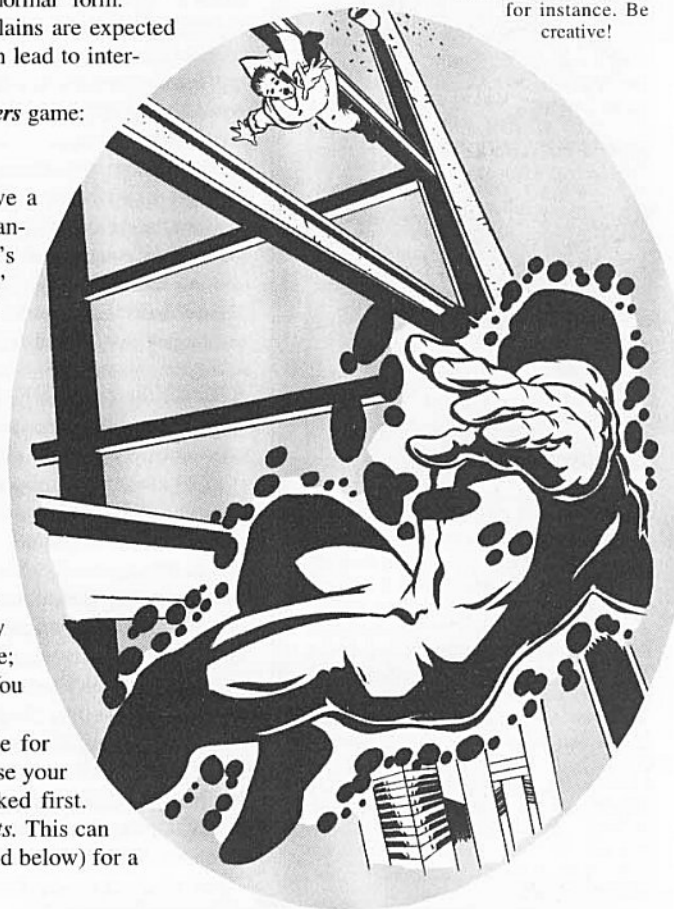
Each super may pick one Power Group related to his origin. All super-powers within this Power Group receive a -10% cost break. Any super-powers that the GM ruled were *not* in the Power Group are purchased at normal cost.

### THE STICK SYSTEM

If all of a PC's super-powers fall within one Power Group, there is no extra charge. For *each* additional Power Group, there is an extra Unusual Background charge. This charge might be as low as 5 or 10 points, or might be equal to the point cost to be a super in the first place! This *really* motivates players to unify those super-powers . . .

### COMBINATION SYSTEMS

There are a number of ways to combine the above approaches – a discount for the first Power Group, a penalty for subsequent Groups, for instance. Be creative!



## IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND

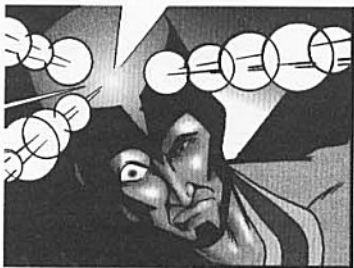
One of the biggest changes that first-edition players will notice is that there are no psionic super-powers in *GURPS Supers, Second Edition*. This was a deliberate change, made for several reasons.

First, of course, is that the *Basic Set* includes a perfectly workable system that includes all of the better-known psi powers. Unless the GM rules otherwise, all these powers are available to supers. It is possible to create very powerful psis using nothing but the *Basic Set*.

The second reason was the release of *GURPS Psionics*. This 128-page rulebook is completely devoted to psi in all its various forms. We would have done an injustice to David Pulver's work if we had chosen to cut it down to fit into the limited space of *Supers*. Instead, we encourage GMs who are interested in psionics to purchase it – they won't be disappointed.

The final factor in the decision related to Power Groups and the overall consistency of the game system. Power Groups didn't work too well with super-powers, because they are so widely varied.

But psi powers traditionally fall quite logically into a few well-defined areas: Psychokinesis, Telepathy, Healing, etc. Rather than try to force psi in a direction it doesn't naturally lean, we chose to switch back to the *GURPS Basic Set* method of handling psi Power Groups, then expand from there in *Psionics*.



### CHARACTER CONCEPTION

This doesn't mean that a metahuman cannot derive his super-powers from his mind. After all, the explanation of a super-power is simply a special effect! If Captain Kumquat uses "mental energy" to form impenetrable barriers of vegetation, there's no reason to consult the psionic rules looking for a psi power to emulate this. Just design the appropriate super-power and call it "mental command of plants."

The GM of a *Supers* campaign can still have the occasional *true* psibervillain or hero – just use the *Basic Set* rules to generate the NPC. And if the gamemaster wants a lot of psi activity, he should use *GURPS Psionics*.

*Personal Code of Honor:* For a super who wants to live by personal rules that don't fit the above Codes, the GM can allow a Personal Code of Honor. The player must write a clear description of the code. The GM sets its disadvantage value, from -5 to -15 points.

### DEPENDENTS SEE P. B38

Dependents are a classic disadvantage for super-characters. Where would the comic-book hero be without a "normal" girlfriend, boyfriend, boss, kid brother, or doddering aunt?

Note that an important reason for secret identities (see p. 20) is to protect one's loved ones from retaliation. Therefore, a hero with a successful secret identity is unlikely to have Dependents. Or, more precisely: he may have dependents, but their frequency of appearance should be very low, because they aren't likely to get involved in super-adventures.

### DUTY SEE P. B39

*Extremely Hazardous Duty:* This is an increased level of the Duty disadvantage described on p. B39. You are "on duty" almost all the time, and risk death or serious injury more often than not. There are significant penalties for failure to perform the duty when demanded: dismissal in disgrace, imprisonment, perhaps even death. This is a mandatory duty for special operations soldiers who are in active military service (and supers in the military would *certainly* be considered "special ops"). Other character types for whom this degree of duty is appropriate include police officers on patrol duty, scouts, explorers, full-time spies or intelligence agents, and bodyguards. -20 points.

*Involuntary Duties:* Some characters may have duties that are enforced by threats to self or loved ones, or by exotic methods of mind control. Such a forced duty can result in difficult decisions or surprising insights for the affected character. An involuntary duty would *not* include military service by draft (although service by impressment, as practiced by the British navy of the 18th century, would qualify), nor would any other "normal" service. Only cases where life or sanity are directly at stake qualify.

For instance, if the Flying Avocado's brain was taken over by Dr. Zod's Orbital Mind Control Laser, and the hero is now being forced to rob banks, he would have an involuntary duty bonus. If a duty is involuntary, add an additional -5 points to its value.

### ENEMIES SEE P. B39

Continuing adversaries – whether mundane criminals or super-foes – are another important part of the *Supers* genre.

However, it is important for the GM not to let a campaign turn into an Enemies Zoo. If every PC has a frequent Enemy (or two, or three), the adventures will be driven not by the campaign plot but by "let's see whose Enemy shows up this week." No Enemy should be allowed unless the player presents a good rationale and an interesting description of the foe.

Of course, if the campaign winds up with lots of Enemies, and they *all* show up at once, the adventure becomes the Great Super-Villain Conspiracy.

Not that all Enemies are villains! Super-crook PCs can have heroes as Enemies, as well as rival criminals. Vigilante heroes can have Enemies on both sides of the law; a self-righteous Good Guy metahuman is an amusing enemy for a vigilante. And even lawful heroes can have rivals. A powerful super who wants to humiliate you or show you up is a legitimate Enemy!

If the PCs make up a super-team, it is appropriate to have the whole team share an Enemy. In that case, the GM rolls only once per session for the whole team to see if the Enemy appears.

## PACIFISM SEE P. B35

Any of the types of Pacifism is appropriate to a metahuman adventurer. Heroes who cannot kill (but *can* maim) are staples of fiction, as are villains who will fight only in self-defense.

A type of Pacifism especially suited to the *Supers* genre is *Cannot Harm Innocents*. This is a "subset" or weaker form of *Cannot Kill*; you cannot take both. A super who takes *Cannot Harm Innocents* may use deadly force *only* on a foe who is attempting to do him serious harm. Capture is not "serious harm" unless the super is already under penalty of death! A super who Cannot Harm Innocents will never intentionally do anything that causes, or even *threatens*, injury to the uninvolved, especially uninvolved normals. -10 points.

## NEW DISADVANTAGES

Most of the new disadvantages described below could be considered "cinematic," if not actually silly. They are suitable for any *Supers* campaign, even a "realistic" one, but could also be used in other campaigns.

Super-disadvantages, which are available *only* to supers, aliens, and similar unusual creatures, are described on pp. 48-49.

### AMNESIA -10/-25 POINTS

You've lost your memory – you can't remember any of your past life, including your name. Your amnesia may be Partial or Total.

If you have Partial Amnesia, you can see your character sheet, but the GM may reserve up to 30 points for use as he sees fit for disadvantages. Other than these secret disadvantages, you know that you can do certain things and use certain skills, but have no idea where you learned how to do them. You are likely to have enemies – and possibly friends – that you can't remember. If you turn yourself in to the police, they can check your fingerprints, but it's a gamble. You might turn out to be a wanted criminal! And even if you're an honest citizen, finding out your name won't restore your memory! Partial Amnesia is a -10 point disadvantage.

Total Amnesia (-25 points) is much more serious. Your physical skills are unaffected, but the GM makes all of your Mental skill rolls, and makes them at a -2 penalty! You have no idea what advantages, disadvantages, and skills you have – if a player chooses to play a character with this disadvantage, the only things he can choose when designing it are those things that can be seen in a mirror. Everything else is assigned by the GM (and the GM holds onto the original character sheet until his memory is restored)!

If you are playing a character with Total Amnesia, the GM knows what quirks and mental disadvantage you possess . . . *and you don't*. So, from time to time, he will overrule your statements about what you are doing. For instance, you won't know you have the Berserk disadvantage until you go berserk.

This disadvantage can only be bought off if there is some rationale for the character recovering his memory. Meeting an old friend, reliving some fateful event, or the ever-popular blow-to-the-head are all reasonable. In most cases, the cure will be related to the cause of the memory loss.

### COMPULSIVE CAROUSING -5 POINTS

You are a party animal. You must go in search of a social gathering at least once a day, and participate for at least an hour. You will try almost *any* mind-altering substance without a second thought, and aren't particularly picky about your romantic partners – you like your music loud and your women (and/or men) hot! You are likely to start the day with beer and cornflakes. Other party types will react to you at +2. Solid citizens will react at -1.



## SUPER MAGIC

The mighty archmage and the powerful evil wizard are both staples of comics with a mystical tinge – from Marvel's *Dr. Strange* to First's Ham the Weather Wizard (from the excellent *Badger* comic). There are several different methods of handling magic in *GURPS Supers*. The GM may pick the system (or systems) that best fits his campaign.

### SUPER-POWERED MAGIC

Magic is nothing more than a special effect. The second of concentration required to activate a super-power is when the mage "casts" the spell. See Necron, p. 124, for an example of such a mage.

### STANDARD MAGIC

Magic is treated exactly as described in the *Basic Set* (Chapter 19) or in *GURPS Magic*, with no special additions (other than the fact that a 500-point mage can be very powerful!).

This system has the advantage of being very simple to implement, as the rules for magic are clearly laid out, each spell is well-defined, and a mage will have much more flexibility than a "normal" super. Disadvantages of running a mage under this system include the comparatively long casting times, and the high fatigue cost compared to other super-powers.

### ENHANCED MAGIC

Magic is treated like Standard Magic, but extra levels of Magery above the third are available for 15 points each, and there is no limit to the number of fatigue points that can be put into such attack skills at Fireball, Lightning Bolt, and Deathtouch.

If magic items are going to be created, use the super-equipment rules – super-high levels of Magery unbalance the magical item creation rules!

This system allows mages to transcend the usual "fantasy" levels of power and reach the potency seen in four-color comics. It also makes magic items as rare as they are in the comics . . .

*Continued on next page . . .*

## SUPER MAGIC (CONTINUED)

### IMPROVED MAGIC

Use the Improved Spell rules from *GURPS Magic* (see pp. M85-90) with the following modifications.

**Skill in a College.** Levels of skill in a college are purchased for 5 points per level, rather than based on the number of spells within that college. The maximum skill in a college is 20.

**Prerequisite Spells.** There are none. The GM may determine that some improvised spells require Magery 2 or 3 (or higher!), however.

**Time to Cast.** All spells can be cast with one turn of concentration.

This method offers a literally *infinite* variety of spells, limited only by your imagination. It still has the disadvantage of the increased fatigue costs over normal supers, though, and requires a very flexible GM.

### KNACKS

All magical powers are bought as Knacks (see p. M96-97). If magical items are available at all, they are bought as super-equipment.

### CURIOUS

**-5, -10 OR -15 POINTS**

You are naturally very inquisitive. When you are presented with an interested item or situation, you must roll vs. IQ (*not* Will) to avoid examining it, even if you *know* it will be dangerous. Good roleplayers won't try to make this roll often . . .

This is not the curiosity that affects *all* PCs ("What's in that cave? Where did the flying saucer come from?"), but the *real* thing ("What happens if I push *this* button?").

You will pull levers, push buttons, open doors, unwrap presents, and generally do everything in your power to investigate thoroughly *any* situation with which you aren't 100% familiar.

You will rationalize your curiosity to others who try to talk you out of it. Common Sense won't help – you know you are taking a risk, but you're curious anyway!

**Extremely Curious:** -10 points. All IQ rolls are made at -2.

**Insatiably Curious:** -15 points. All IQ rolls are made at -5.

### CURSED

**-75 POINTS**

Like Unluckiness, but worse. When anything goes wrong for your party, it happens to you, first and worst. If something goes right, it misses you. And any time the GM feels like hosing you, he can, and you have no complaint coming, because you are cursed. You can't buy this off just by spending points – you must determine what has cursed you and deal with it, and *then* spend the points.

### FLASHBACKS

**VARIABLE**

In a stressful situation, you may experience a *flashback*. These are vivid hallucinations, full participation replays of memories, or any other similar phenomena. The player may choose, at the time of character creation, what *type* of flashback will be experienced, but the content of each episode is up to the GM. Point value is determined according to the severity of the flashback.

Flashbacks are very appropriate as results from a failed Fright Check; roll for a Flashback *whenever* you miss a Fright Check, *or make the Fright roll exactly*, regardless of other results. In any other situation which the GM feels is stressful, he may roll 3 dice; on a 6 or less, you get a flashback.

**-5 points:** The flashback lasts only 2d seconds; attendant hallucinations do not seriously impair skills (-2 on all skill rolls), and accompanying delusions are minor – the victim realizes that he's having a flashback.

**-10 points:** Duration is 1d minutes; hallucination seriously impair skills (-5 to all skills); delusions *seem* real.

**-20 points:** Duration is 3d minutes; hallucinations are so severe that they preclude all skill use; the flashback seems completely, 100% real, and can be potentially fatal, as you are receiving *no* input from the real world.

### GLORY HOUND

**-15 POINTS**

This is an advanced case of Overconfidence (p. B34); a character may not have *both* Glory Hound and Overconfidence. You will *always* take time to talk to the press, pose for photographs, or sign an autograph. You insist on being in the



limelight – you will always take the greatest risks, create complex plans that feature your abilities, lead the charge, etc.

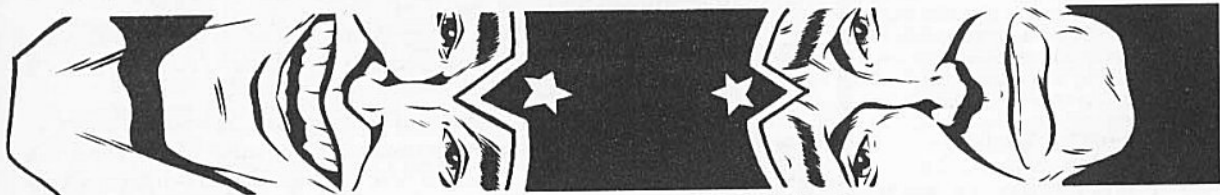
You get a +1 reaction (at least publicly) from the press, small children, teenagers, etc., and a -1 reaction from co-workers, fellow heroes, etc. If the glory-hounding is successful, it can lead to an improved Reputation with the general public; buy this separately during character creation, or earn it free during the course of a campaign.

### JINXED

**-20/-40/-60 POINTS**

A Jinxed character is to bad luck as a plague-carrier is to disease. It does not affect him, but it gets everyone else around him. If you are Jinxed, anyone in your immediate vicinity suffers a -1 through -3 penalty (depending on the severity of the Jinx: -20 points per -1) on any roll that the GM makes for them. They have no penalty on rolls they make themselves. Thus, there is no way for the rest of the party to be sure that a Jinx is present without keeping track of failed “sure-fire” attempts over a period of time.

A Jinx gets everybody, friend or foe. Ulysses was a perfect example. He was tough, clever, and determined, and he survived everything thrown at him, but none of his shipmates made it. Part of his own survival was due to the fact that things went wrong for his foes as well, with Ulysses around – Polyphemus, for example, missed some easy IQ rolls when dealing with Ulysses.



### MANIC-DEPRESSIVE

**-20 POINTS**

Your moods are on a see-saw – you bounce back and forth between bubbling enthusiasm and morose withdrawal. At the beginning of each play session, roll one die. On a 1-3, you are in your Manic phase; a 4-6 indicates Depression. Every five hours of game-time thereafter, roll 3d. A 10 or less indicates that you begin a mood swing. Over the next hour, you will shift from your current phase into its opposite. You will remain in the new phase for at least five hours (after which you again roll 3d).

In the Manic phase, you suffer from Overconfidence (see p. B34). You will be friendly, outgoing, and excited about whatever it is you're doing. In the Depressive phase, the Overconfidence is replaced with Absentmindedness (p. B30) and Laziness (p. B34). You will not be interested in doing anything other than lying in bed, sitting in a dark room and moping, or other similar activities. If forced by companions to do something, you will be at a -5 on all skills.

### NO SENSE OF HUMOR

**-10 POINTS**

You never get any jokes and think everyone is earnestly serious at all times. Likewise, you never joke, and you *are* earnestly serious at all times. Others react at -2 to you in any situation where this disadvantage becomes evident.

### ON THE EDGE

**-15 POINTS**

Sometimes you don't care whether you live or die. You are not actively suicidal, but you will take unreasonable risks in the face of mortal danger. When you face a life-threatening situation, you must make a successful IQ roll before you can retreat (attempt once per turn; 14 or higher fails automatically).

## CHANGES FROM FIRST EDITION

The decision to release this *GURPS Supers* second edition was based on 18 months of feedback from gamers (proof positive that we *do* read our mail!), and lots of late-night discussions. The general goal was to modify the system to make it more generic (hence the elimination of Power Groups, which forced a PC into *our* strictly-defined ideas of what made sense) without making it so free-form as to be a “design-your-own-system” game.

The overall result is a system that greatly simplifies character creation. Where it used to take an hour to design a character (at least for the author), it can now be done in 30 minutes.

The biggest change is the elimination of Power Groups. For those that liked them, we've offered several options for keeping them (see pp. 14 and 25). The new rules for Power and Skill are found on p. 27.

All psi powers have been removed from the book; use the *Basic Set* or *GURPS Psionics*. Ditto with the cinematic martial arts rules – *GURPS Martial Arts* does a *much* more thorough job of covering this topic than we could in a few pages. We've used the extra space for more examples and super-abilities.

### POINT COSTS

Supers who have a low number of very strong super-powers will probably find that their characters are now cheaper than they were before.

Characters that have a large number of skills (if they bought every skill in a Power Group, for instance) will probably find that their point value has increased.

When translating the sample characters (see Chapters 8 and 9), most stayed at 500 points. Flamin' Jane and Chémico (both skill-heavy) increased to 600 points; Kodiak is now 550. Those with very few super-skills had to be beefed up to make 500 again – see Black Pearl, Icepick, and Dwarfstar.

PCs with a very high (30+) ST will be radically cheaper with the new Enhanced ST rules (p. 39).

Attack powers now do 1d damage per level (instead of 1d per 2 levels).

## SECRET IDENTITIES

Some supers – especially villains and crimefighters – have a “secret identity.” Such a super’s life as a vigilante (or villain) is a well-kept secret. Only his closest family and friends know, and the super will go to great lengths to keep his privacy. The usual reason is to shelter friends and loved ones from harassment by superfoes/the *Daily News*/outraged citizens/police. Therefore, if a super has a secret identity, his Dependents (if any) should not come into adventures very often.

If a super does *not* have a secret identity, it is possible that foes will try to reach him through his loved ones. This can happen occasionally to anyone. It should happen regularly to those supers who have taken a Dependent!

### SECRET IDENTITY AS A DISADVANTAGE

A secret identity is a disadvantage because it limits your behavior. It is difficult to maintain a secret identity. When a PC has a secret identity, the GM should occasionally include a serious challenge, in the form of someone who threatens to discover it. This can be determined randomly by rolling three dice before each game session; on a 6 or less, a threat to the secret identity will take place.

The value of this disadvantage is figured as per the Secret disadvantage; it is worth more to a criminal (who will be jailed if found out) than to a hero (who will just be inconvenienced).

Anyone with a Status of 3 or more gets an extra -10 points for a Secret Identity, because of the attention that the media and the public pays to his every move, making it that much harder to maintain a secret identity. The GM should introduce a challenge to the identity on a roll of 7 or less.

If the Secret Identity is lost, it is traded in for twice its point value in disadvantages; new Enemies, or more frequent appearance of old Enemies, are appropriate. (Alternatively, if the PC has an appropriate advantage of similar value, he could give it up – but there are few advantages that would logically be lost just because a secret identity has become known.)

### SUPER IDENTITY

It is also possible for a super to entirely give up his “normal” life. He might wear his costume at all times, use his super name as his legal name, and so on. In effect, the super has given up his old identity entirely. If he did a good job of covering his tracks, nobody will ever be able to find out who he was, so his relatives are safe from retaliation. This doesn’t have to be an advantage or disadvantage; it can just be part of the character story. Or it can be a regular Secret.

Each turn that you are in combat, make an IQ roll (again, 14+ fails) to avoid making an All-Out attack (or the near-insane, suicidal behavior of your choice). Most sensible people avoid you (-2 reaction from anyone who realizes that you’re crazy). Primitives and low-lives will mistake your disregard for your own life for bravery, giving +2 reactions.

### SECRET

### VARIES

A Secret is some aspect of your life (or your past) that you must keep hidden. Were it made public, the information could harm your reputation, ruin your career, wreck your friendships, and possibly even threaten your life!

The point value of a Secret depends on the consequences if the Secret is revealed. The worse the results, the higher the value, as follows:

*Serious Embarrassment.* If this information gets around, you can forget about ever getting a promotion, getting elected, or marrying well. Alternatively, your Secret could be one that will simply attract unwelcome public attention if it is known. -5 points.

*Utter Rejection.* If your Secret is discovered, your whole life will be changed. Perhaps you would lose your job and be rejected by friends and loved ones. Perhaps you will merely be harassed by admirers, cultists, long-lost relatives, or the press. -10 points.

*Imprisonment or Exile.* If the authorities uncover your Secret, you’ll have to flee, or be imprisoned for a long time (GM’s discretion). -20 points.

*Possible Death.* Your Secret is so terrible that you might be executed by the authorities, lynched by a mob, or assassinated by the Mafia (or the CIA) if it were ever revealed – you would be a hunted man. -30 points.

If a Secret is made public, there will be an immediate negative effect, as described above, ranging from embarrassment to possible death. There is a lasting effect – you suddenly acquire new, permanent disadvantages whose point value equals *twice* that of the Secret itself! The points from these new disadvantages go first to buy off the Secret, and may then (at the GM’s option only) be used to buy off other disadvantages or (rarely) to buy new advantages. Any unused points are lost, and the character’s point value is reduced.

The new disadvantages acquired must be appropriate to the Secret and should be determined (with the GM’s assistance) when the character is created. Most Secrets turn into Enemies, Bad Reputations, and Social Stigmas. They might also reduce your Status or Wealth – going from Filthy Rich to merely Very Wealthy is effectively a -10 point disadvantage. Some Secrets could even turn into mental or physical disadvantages, though this would be rare.

Similarly, if the GM allows you to buy off old disadvantages with the new points, these too must be appropriate to the Secret. The most common disadvantages that could be bought off are Duties and Dependents.

In general, a Secret appears in a particular game session if the GM rolls a 6 or less on three dice before the adventure begins. However, *as for all other disadvantages of this type*, the GM need not feel constrained by the appearance roll – if he thinks the Secret should come into play, it does!

When a Secret appears, it is not necessarily made public. The character must somehow prevent the Secret from being revealed. This may require him to cave in to blackmail or extortion, to steal the incriminating documents, or even to silence the person who knows the Secret. Regardless of the solution, however, it’s only temporary – the Secret will appear again and again until it is finally bought off. Secrets may be bought off either automatically through exposure (see above) or with earned character points over the course of play.

## SECRET IDENTITY VARIABLE

A Secret Identity is a special kind of Secret (see sidebar, p. 20). It is another *persona* that you use for deeds that you wouldn't want connected with your "real" self. Many supers utilize Secret Identities in order to protect friends and relatives from vengeful enemies, or just to ensure a little bit of privacy. Such an identity may be "weak," supported by no official paperwork, or it may be a true Alternate Identity (see p. 12).

When a PC has a Secret Identity, the GM should occasionally provide a serious challenge to it, in the form of someone who threatens to expose it. This can be determined randomly by rolling 3d before each game session; on a 6 or less, there is a threat of exposure.

Anyone with a Status of 3 or more gets an extra -10 points for a Secret Identity, because of the attention the media and the public pay to his every move. The GM should introduce a challenge to such an ID on a 7 or less, instead of 6.

If a Secret Identity is revealed, trade it in for twice its value in new disadvantages or lost advantages, as for a regular Secret (see above).

Most Secret Identities will be of the -10 point variety.

## TERMINALLY ILL -50/-75/-100 POINTS

You are going to die . . . soon. In a *Supers* campaign, this is most likely to be a side effect of your powers or of their origin, but other tragedies are possible.

Point cost is determined by the length of time remaining. One month (or less) is worth -100 points (and you'd better work fast!). More than one month but less than one year is worth -75 points, and from one to two years is worth -50 points. More than two years is worth nothing – anyone might be hit by a truck in two years!

If the GM is running a one-shot adventure, he should disallow this disadvantage as meaningless. If, during the course of a campaign, the character acquires a "miracle cure," has himself cloned or cyborged, or anything else that extends his life past the termination date, he must buy off this disadvantage. If he doesn't have enough points, all earned character points should go to this purpose until it's bought off.

This disadvantage is best fitted either to a character whose player really intends to play as if doomed, or to a character who will struggle nobly to beat his fate, right up to the last minute.

## TRADEMARK VARIABLE

Many metavillains and vigilantes have special symbols – Trademarks – that they leave at the scene of action as a way of "tagging" their work.

No character may have more than one Trademark. Multiple actions (e.g., binding your victims with purple phone wire, painting a frog on the wall, and discharging every fire extinguisher in the building) simply count as a higher level, *not* multiple Trademarks.

**-1 points:** Your Trademark takes very little time to leave and cannot be used to trace your identity; it is essentially a Quirk. A typical example is something left at the scene – a playing card, a small stuffed animal, and so on – as long as it can't be traced and takes little time.

**-5 points:** Your Trademark is still simple, but you *absolutely* must leave it. You cannot leave the scene until you do, even if your enemies are breaking down the door.

**-10 points:** As above, but leaving your Trademark increases your chances of capture – initial carving, notes, traceable clues, and so on. Leaving this sort of Trademark takes a minimum of 30 seconds. Anyone searching the crime scene and examining your Trademark receives a +2 to their Criminology roll.

## MELTING POINTS

Flaming supers will need to know melting and boiling points for some common materials. The first number shown is the melting point, the second is the boiling point. All values below are given in degrees Fahrenheit.

Calcium	1574.6, 2708.6
Carbon	6422, 8720.6
Copper	1981.4, 4703
Diamond	6422, 8720.6
Gold	1945.4, 5370.8
Helium	-458, -451.5
Hydrogen	-434.45, -422.5
Iron	2795, 5432
Lead	621.5, 3171.2
Magnesium	1203.8, 2024.6
Mercury	-38, 674
Neon	-415.6, -410.1
Nickel	2148.8, 5072
Oxygen	-361.12, -297.4
Phosphorus	111.38, 536
Platinum	3216.2, 6920.6
Plutonium	1183.1, 5855
Potassium	146.57, 1425.2
Quartz	2930, 4046
Radium	1292, 3158.6
Silicon	2570, 4271
Silver	994.6, 4013.6
Sulfur	146.6, 832.28
Table Salt	1473.8, 2575.4
Tin	449.4, 4100
Uranium	2070.14, 6904.4
Water	32, 212
Zinc	786.92, 1664.6





## HAUTE COUTURE FOR THE SUPER SET

### BY THE SUAVE MARAUDER

Super powers are all very well, but what really sets a super apart from the crowd is a sense of *style*. Any bozo can throw on a pair of longjohns and a beach-towel, but the best supers create a look, an image, that's all theirs.

The basics of a super outfit are, and remain, the bodysuit and the cape, traditionally in bold primary colors (though, as everybody knows, basic black is *always* appropriate). The "trunks over tights" look from the '40s and '50s is out, out, out. Men, don't be afraid to show off a little. Some say that chest and cape monograms are gauche, but I say it's *your* super identity. Express it! And if you've got the pecs, who *says* you need a shirt?

In the last few years super-style has taken a swing to the right. Far be it from me to decry the elegant simplicity of a smartly tailored jumpsuit, but remember – accessories make the outfit. Anything from a psi-amplifying helmet or a pair of winged pumps to a smart belt and a few snap bracelets can make the difference between bland and bashing. On the opposite end of the spectrum, fantastic things are being done (particularly in Europe, natch) with daring elements like abstract prints and asymmetrical geometric motifs. *Don't* try this at home, kiddies. But if your designer can pull it off, lucky you.

Urban avengers, particularly of the nocturnal variety, have always favored a look that will cast a dramatic shadow on the terrified perpetrators. The original mystery men of the '30s and '40s did wonderful things with just a slouched Fedora, an opera cape, and a knit suit. Savvy supers are returning to this classic look. Also a favorite is the animal motif – you're sure to make an entrance if your shadow looks like a wolf, bug, bird-of-prey, or other creature of the night.

*Continued on next page . . .*

*-15 points:* Your Trademark is so elaborate – dousing the captured thugs with a certain cologne, painting the entire crime scene pink, writing a long poem to the police – that it virtually assures your eventual capture (with this level of disadvantage, the GM may give clues *without* a successful Criminology roll).

Remember that a Trademark is an action separate from capturing the crooks or committing a crime. Always entering a bank through the roof is not a Trademark – spray-painting a giant pentagram on the roof before entering *is!*

### WEIRDNESS MAGNET

**-15 POINTS**

Strange and bizarre things happen to you with alarming frequency. You are the one for whom demons will stop and chat. Magic items with disturbing properties will find their way to you. The only talking dog on 20th-century Earth will come to you with his problems. Dimensional gates sealed for centuries will crack open just so that you can be bathed in the energies released . . . or perhaps the denizens on the other side will invite you to tea.

Nothing lethal will happen to you, at least not immediately, and occasionally some weirdness will be beneficial. But most of the time it will be terribly, terribly inconvenient. People who understand what a weirdness magnet is (and that you are one) will react to you at -2. The exceptions will be parapsychologists and thrill-seekers, who will follow you around!

## SKILLS

All the "normal" skills are available to supers. Well-rounded characters should have a variety of such skills. Especially useful ones for the genre include Acrobatics, Brawling, Computer Operation, Criminology, Detect Lies, Diagnosis, Diplomacy, Disguise, Driving, Escape, Fast Talk, First Aid, Interrogation, Judo, Karate, Languages, Leadership, Occultism, Piloting, Psychology, Running, Savoir-Faire, Scrounging, Sex Appeal, Shadowing, Stealth, Strategy, Streetwise, Swimming, Tactics, and weapon skills of all types.

### THROWING

**SEE P. 80**

Throwing skill can be used to throw *anything* the super can pick up. See p. 80 for more information on Throwing.

### RIDING (FLYING PERSON)

To stay on a flying person's back, take Riding (Flying Person). This skill defaults to DX-5 (but not to Animal Handling -3!), to any other Riding skill-4, or to Surfboard or Skateboard at -4.

## NEW SKILLS

### BODY SENSE (PHYSICAL/HARD)

**DEFAULTS TO DX-6 OR  
ACROBATICS-3**

This is the ability to adjust quickly after blinking or teleporting; roll at -2 if you are changing facing, -5 if you are going from vertical to horizontal or vice versa. Note that you cannot change physical *position* during a teleport – only orientation.

A successful roll allows you to act normally on your next turn. A failed roll means disorientation – no actions except defense possible for 1 turn. A critical failure means you fall down, physically stunned.

Modifier: +3 for Absolute Direction.



## CLOAK (PHYSICAL/AVERAGE)

This is the skill of using a cloak or cape, both offensively and defensively. Treat a cloak in close combat as if it were a shield (see sidebar, p. B114).

There are two types of cloaks used in combat: a large, heavy, hooded full-length cloak, and the smaller, light-weight, torso-length dress cloak that most supers wear as a cape.

### HEAVY CLOAK

The heavy cloak is used as a shield; treat the defensive maneuver as a Block, figured at half cloak skill with PD 2.

The offensive maneuver with a heavy cloak is to attempt to envelop the opponent. The cloak is treated as a thrown weapon (SS 12, Acc 1, Max 2, no half damage). The maximum aiming bonus is +1. A thrown heavy cloak may be Dodged or Blocked, and Parried by a weapon of 2 lbs. or more. A heavy cloak weighs 5 lbs.

At a 1-yard range, the attacker may hold onto the heavy cloak while throwing it. If the throw misses or the defense is successful, one turn is needed to ready it again for offensive or defensive use. If the throw is successful, the attacker may attempt to pull his opponent off-balance. Roll a Quick Contest of ST; the attacker is at +2. If the defender loses the contest, he is at -2 DX the next turn. If he loses by 5 or more, he is pulled off his feet onto his knees. On a critical failure, the defender falls down. It takes a successful DX roll and 1 turn to remove the cloak. In the meantime, the cloak blinds the defender and prevents any attack or active defense.

### LIGHT CLOAK

The light cloak is more versatile. Although it only has PD 1 when used as a shield, it can be used more creatively as an attack weapon. A light cloak weighs 2 lbs. As a weapon, it can:

- Be thrown over the opponent's head.
- Entangle the opponent's weapon or arm.
- Be snapped at the opponent's face.

Throwing the light cloak is similar to throwing the heavy cloak (same range modifiers), but it cannot be held onto, can be parried by any readied weapon, and requires no DX roll to remove. The opponent is blinded until he takes a turn to remove the cloak.

Entangling the opponent's weapon allows the cloak wielder to retain his grip on the cloak. Roll a Quick Contest of the attacker's Cloak skill (minus any modifier to hit - see *Striking at Weapons*, pp. B110-111) and the defender's Weapon Skill (or DX if carrying a ranged weapon). If a melee weapon is entangled, the defender must win a Contest of weapon skills before he can use his weapon again. Each such attempt counts as an action. If the cloak-user wishes to attack with another weapon, he is at -2 (in addition to any off-hand penalties) if he retains his hold on the entangling cloak. The defender may fire an entangled gun, but the shot is at an additional -6 to hit, and no aim bonuses may be taken. A successful contest of DX vs. Cloak skill is required to free a missile weapon.

Entangling the arm is a Quick Contest of Cloak-2 (the -2 is for aiming at the arm) versus the defender's DX. If the defender is holding a melee weapon in either hand, he has the opportunity to Parry the cloak before the Quick Contest. The defender must win a Contest of ST to free an entangled arm. Weapon fire from an entangled arm is treated as above.

Snapping the light cloak in the opponent's face is done at Cloak-5. If the attack is successful, the attacker may be blinded for a turn. Any defense may be used against this attack. Critical success on the Cloak skill roll does one point of damage to one eye (roll randomly to determine which one), blinds the opponent

DEFAULTS TO DX-5,  
BUCKLER-4 OR SHIELD-4

## HAUTE COUTURE FOR THE SUPER SET (CONTINUED)

The preferred look in powered armor remains sleek and streamlined, but massive. Though there are always a few daring souls who "dress down" with a kitschy, blocky-is-better look. And bully for them, say I.

For heroines, there's no law that says you *have* to be cheesecake. See above on jumpsuits, and I'll say it again - accessorize! Or you can go for the dramatic Euro-look, which can be as sexy as anything with nary an inch of flesh exposed. Not that I'm putting down the Flamin' Jane school of glamor-gal costuming. If you got it, baby, flaunt it. Remember, the magic words are EXPRESS YOURSELF!

Oh, and since I *know* you're wondering about all those itsy-bitsy, teeny-weenie thongs and sheaths that the most glamorous super-gals favor . . . it's all done with technologically-advanced, electrostatically-charged polymers. No self-respecting heroine need come within a mile of the glue-pot. Not in the '90s.

My fashion predictions? For the men, less fabric, more muscles. For the ladies, look for a return of the skirt, at least for non-airborne heroines.

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## YOU CAN FLY!

Flight, in its various forms, is one of the most common super advantages, both in the comics and in gaming. It's exciting, cinematic, and very useful! For general rules on flight, including combat and active defenses, see p. B139.

Unusual situations will require skill rolls to avoid a loss of control in the air. The Flight skill (P/A, defaulting to DX-4) should be bought by any flying super who wants to perform acrobatics. Basic DX is used to control a super-jump. Levitation skill (p. B173) is used for psionic flight. A Gadgeteer can define a gadget skill for his creation, or just buy Flight.

### FLIGHT AND HIGH SPEED

Characters will often want to make impossibly tight turns. Page 139 in the *GURPS Basic Set* covers the calculation of turning radius. Assume that the maximum number of Gs a super can pull in a turn is equal to his HT/2.

If a super needs to make a tighter turn, he can increase the number of Gs he can handle by 1 by making a successful HT roll and a Skill-4 roll. For each additional G beyond the first, subtract 2 from each roll. On a failed HT roll, he blacks out for 2d turns. On a failed skill roll, he loses control.

*Example:* Pteradon has HT 12 and is flying at 20 hexes/turn. His 1G turning radius is 40 hexes. He can make a 6G turn at no risk, lowering the radius to 7 hexes. If he wanted to tighten it up even more, he could pull a 7G turn by making HT and skill rolls.

### DIFFERENT MODES OF FLIGHT

*"Basic" Flight.* This is covered on p. 40. Essentially, the super just thinks about flying, and he's off. Flight can be given a special effect to make it more interesting. A trail of fire, a hideous wailing noise, the outward appearance of a huge metallic bird . . . the more creative, the better, as long as it doesn't "accidentally" give the super a free power. Basic flight can also be made interesting with accessibility limitations, whether serious (Only Within 10 Feet of Ground: -30%) or silly (Must Flap Arms: -20%). Take Super Flight (p. 46) for real speed, or Hyperflight (p. 41) to go faster than light.

*Continued on next page . . .*



for 1 second, and mentally stuns him. If the attacker makes the attack roll by less than 5 and the defender fails the defense roll, the defender's DX is reduced by 1 for the next turn only.

Damage to cloaks is handled by the rules in the sidebar on p. B120. A cloak (heavy or light) has DR 1, and can only be destroyed by 5 points or more of *cutting* damage (3 points for a light cloak).

### FLIGHT (PHYSICAL/AVERAGE)

**DEFAULTS TO DX-4**

This is the skill to use a Flight power *well*, for acrobatics, tight turns, etc. See the sidebar.

For a naturally winged creature, Flight skill defaults to DX, but can still be improved as a normal P/A skill.

### INTIMIDATION (MENTAL/AVERAGE)

**DEFAULTS TO ST-5  
OR ACTING-3**

This is a social "influence" skill, used for persuasion. The essence of intimidation is to convince the subject that you are able and willing, and perhaps eager, to hurt him.

Intimidation may be substituted for a reaction roll in any situation, though it is at a -3 penalty when used in a request for aid. A successful Intimidation roll gives a Good (though not friendly) reaction. A failed roll gives a Bad reaction. Most people will remember an intimidation attempt, whether successful or not, for a long time; it can permanently affect an NPC's attitude.

When Intimidation is used against a PC (or, at the GM's option, against a NPC), this can also be rolled as a contest of Intimidation vs. Will. See *Influence Rolls*, sidebar, p. B93.

*Modifiers:* Up to +2 for displays of strength or bloodthirstiness, or +3 for superhuman strength or inhuman bloodthirstiness. Appropriate reputation modifiers will certainly count! +1 for each 6" of height that you have over the subject, -1 if you are shorter (-2 if you are more than 6" shorter). +2 for hideous appearance.

The GM may give a further +1 bonus for witty or frightening dialogue, but should apply a penalty if the attempt is clumsy or inappropriate.

Fearlessness counts *against* Intimidation attempts. The GM may apply any level of penalty if the PCs are attempting to intimidate somebody who, in his opinion, just can't be intimidated. This includes anyone with the Unfazeable advantage.

*Magical and Psionic Modifiers:* Spells and psi talents can also be used to frighten people. If any such ability is used to supplement an attempt to intimidate, allow +2 for a successful attempt - +4 for a critical success. A failure has no effect unless the GM wants to penalize a critical failure in some creative way.

*Intimidating a Group:* This skill may be used against several people at once. For every five targets you attempt to intimidate with a single roll, apply a -1 penalty to your skill - up through a maximum of -5 (25 people). A single person cannot intimidate a group of larger than 25 people. A group of characters may attempt to intimidate a group of larger than 25 - 3 characters could intimidate up to 75 (3x25) people! Use the bonuses of the *best* intimidator in the group, and the penalties of the toughest target in the enemy group.

*Running a Bluff:* If the PC can make both a Fast-Talk and an Intimidation roll, and roleplays it well, he can appear to be intimidating even when he can't back it up. This is the only way to intimidate some people (martial arts masters, world leaders, bellicose drunks). Success on both rolls gives a Very Good reaction. Success on one and failure on the other gives a Poor reaction. Failure on both gives a Very Bad reaction.

Note that Interrogation skill can default to Intimidation-3. It will not help you tell a good answer from a bad one, but it can get people to talk.

## POWER GROUPS

Below are the power groups from *GURPS Supers, First Edition*, for those who wish to retain them and adapt them to a second-edition campaign.

<b>AIR POWER</b>	<b>10/LEVEL</b>	Pyrokinesis Ring of Fire Smoke Wall of Fire Warm	
Air Sphere Create Air Create Gas Smoke Vacuum Whirlwind Wind Blast Wind Jet			
<b>ALTERATION POWER</b>	<b>12/LEVEL</b>	<b>LIGHT POWER</b>	<b>8/LEVEL</b>
Absorb Attribute Absorb Normal Skill Absorb Super-Skill Drain Attribute Morph Morph Memory		Color Flash Illuminate Laser Illusion	
<b>COLD/ICE POWER</b>	<b>10/LEVEL</b>	<b>LIQUID POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>
Chains of Ice Cool Cryokinesis Frost Jet Ice Spear Ice Sphere Ice Surfing Ice Wall Icy Surface Shape Ice		Control Liquid Create Liquid Dehydrate Destroy Liquid Water Cannon Water Jet	
<b>DARKNESS POWER</b>	<b>7/LEVEL</b>	<b>MAGNETISM POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>
Animate Shadow Blind Create Darkness		Bind Magnetize Metal TK Surge	
<b>DENSITY CONTROL POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>	<b>MATTER CONTROL</b>	<b>10/LEVEL</b>
Decrease Density Increase Density		Alter Analyze Animate Bond Control Animated Object Disintegrate	
<b>EARTH POWER</b>	<b>10/LEVEL</b>	<b>NATURE POWER</b>	<b>6/LEVEL</b>
Chains of Earth Mold Earth Mold Stone Sand Jet Stone Missile		Animal Control Fish Control Plant Control Sense Animal Sense Fish Sense Plant	
<b>ELECTRICAL POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>	<b>SONIC POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>
Confuse Dampen Lightning Surge		Deafen Mimicry Neutralize Sound Sonic Blast	
<b>GRAVITY POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>	<b>VIBRATION POWER</b>	<b>9/LEVEL</b>
Anti-G Increase Gravity		Buzzsaw Shockwave Vibratory Blast	
<b>HEAT/FIRE POWER</b>	<b>10/LEVEL</b>	<b>WEATHER POWER</b>	<b>8/LEVEL</b>
Control Fire Fireball Flame Jet Neutralize Fire		Call Hail Call Lightning Control Temperature Control Weather Control Winds Whirlwind	

## YOU CAN FLY! (CONTINUED)

*Flight Via Gadget.* Many supers get their aerial powers from devices of some kind, whether they're ultra-tech or simply "magic." See the *Gadgeteering* rules in Chapter 3. Note that if the gadget cannot be lost, broken, or stolen, it's merely a special effect. If a witch requires her broom to fly, and can lose the broom, it's a gadget. If Swami Pastrami flies on a "magic carpet" which appears in answer to his summons, that's not a gadget; it's a special effect, and it's free.

*Winged Flight.* This is very showy – the super has real wings, which may be angel-feathered, demon-leathered, or anything else the player likes. This is considered a -25% limitation because wings require extra takeoff and landing space, and because damage to the wings will ground the flyer. Any Appearance modifiers the super gets from his wings must be bought separately.

*Gliding.* This limitation halves the cost of flight. It can easily be gadget-based; a normal or super normal could get Gliding ability from a gadgeteered set of wings. It's especially useful in cities, where there are lots of tall buildings to take off from and asphalt parking lots to provide thermals for lift!

*Matter Surfing.* This power (p. 42) is like a low-altitude Flight with a special effect. Use Flight skill to keep control; alternatively, anyone with the mundane P/A skills Surfing or Skateboard can use them here, if they are bought at full cost (not hobby cost).

*Jumping and Bouncing.* The Super Jumping skill is described on p. 46; it requires no Flight skill to control, and doesn't allow mid-air course corrections. A super could combine Super Jumping with Gliding, though, for a guaranteed instant takeoff and a controllable flight and landing! Bouncing (p. 37) is very useful with Jumping.

*Levitation.* This psi skill is described on p. B173.

### "ONLY WHILE FLYING"

A super might want to have a power that only worked while he was in flight. The Accessibility limitation "Only While Flying" is worth -30%. It is occasionally inconvenient, but not really "crippling" unless the Flight advantage itself cannot be used at will. In that case, just put the same limitation on the other power as on Flight.

### HELPING THE WALKERS

Keep in mind that earthbound supers may miss a lot of the action if there are more than a couple of flyers in the group. A strong flyer can always carry a buddy, within the encumbrance limitations on B139. Or someone can take a Flight power with Area Effect and Usable on Others enhancements, and carry everyone within the area regardless of weight!

# ASTOUNDING SUPER-ABILITIES

## EXCITING AND DANGEROUS

**T**HESE ARE THE ABILITIES THAT SPELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SUPERBLY-TRAINED HUMAN AND A *SUPER*. THE MUNDANES CAN ONLY GAZE IN AWE AND SIGH – NEVER KNOWING THE EXHILARATION OF POWER, OR REALIZING THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY THAT COMES WITH IT. WHILE NORMALS ONLY DREAM OF THESE FEATS, THEY ARE THE EVERYDAY MEAT AND DRINK OF A *SUPER*!

SUPER ABILITIES ARE, LOGICALLY ENOUGH, AVAILABLE ONLY TO METAHUMANS. DEPENDING ON THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH ABILITIES IN THE CAMPAIGN, THE GM MAY SET AN UNUSUAL BACKGROUND POINT COST (SEE P. 11) TO BE PAID BY A CHARACTER IN ORDER TO *BE* A *SUPER*, BEFORE ANY SUPER ABILITIES ARE BOUGHT. THERE ARE SEVERAL TYPES OF SUPER ABILITIES:



## SUPER ATTRIBUTES

Except for ST, these are nothing more than high levels of normal *GURPS* attributes. Before the player goes wild buying up stats, he should remember that defaults are calculated from a *maximum* attribute of 20 – everything else is ignored..

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

A super advantage, in its basic form, is a metahuman ability that operates all the time. The player may decide that some of his advantages are *switchable* – they can be turned on or off at will. This costs no extra points (a change from *Supers, First Edition*). When a PC decides to turn an advantage on or off, he declares it at the beginning of a turn, and can do nothing else that turn. At the *beginning* of the next turn, the switch is made, and the character can act normally. This turn of waiting can be eliminated with the *Instantaneous* enhancement, p. 50.

Super advantages are listed alphabetically starting on p. 35.

## SUPER DISADVANTAGES

Like super advantages, super disadvantages may only be taken by someone who has paid the appropriate Unusual Background cost. Unlike super advantages, super disadvantages are *always* on, and can never be made switchable – after all, a disadvantage that can be turned on and off at will isn't much of a handicap!

Super disadvantages are listed alphabetically starting on p. 48.

## SUPER-POWERS

*This is the major change between Supers, First Edition and Supers, Second Edition. GMs and players should read over this carefully to make sure they understand how Power and Skill are now bought.*

A *super-power* is a metahuman ability which is not always on, and which requires control for proper use. A super-power is defined by two numbers: Power and Skill.

*Power* is the raw “strength” of the ability. It controls range, damage done, weight affected, area affected, etc. Power is bought in levels, which are purchased separately for each super power.

*Skill* with a super-power represents the training to control that ability. All super-powers are purchased from the super skills table (p. 28), substituting DX for IQ when buying a physical super-skill.

### VOLUNTARILY REDUCING POWER

A character *never* has to use his full level of Power (unless he takes the *Full Power Only* limitation, p. 53). If he wishes to “pull his punch” with a super-power, he must tell the GM how much Power he is using *before* he attacks.

### POWER LEVEL COST (LC)

Each power has a Level Cost (LC). This is the point cost of *each level* of Power for that particular super-power. For example, Fireball (p. 60) has LC 6 – it costs 6 points per level of Power. To buy Power 10 in Fireball, a character would have to spend 60 points.



## LATENT ABILITIES

Most super-abilities are either inborn or granted by some accident or special circumstance. In either case, most super-characters can develop their existing abilities (improving Power or skill level), but completely new abilities are unlikely.

Therefore, to create a character with a wide range of super-abilities, a player should start off with all of the desired super-powers. To make this affordable, some of them can be bought at Power level 1, with no points invested in skill – these powers are “latent.” The super can't use them effectively. But later in his career, he will be able to train and develop them.

### ADDING NEW ABILITIES

Alternatively, the GM may choose to let PCs gain powers that they did not start with, as long as the appropriate character points are paid. The GM may still require that the new power bear some relation to the existing ones. For instance, a psionic might develop new psi abilities, while a super specializing in water-oriented skills might also develop some ability to manipulate ice, etc.

In most cases, the new power can then be explained as a delayed reaction to the original origin. If the metahuman is a mutant, the new power is just a late manifestation of the mutation. For a gadgeteer using alien gadgetry, the explanation is “I just found out what this button does!”

## EXTRA EFFORT WITH SUPER-POWERS

A super can put "extra effort" into any use of a super-power and get an effective increase in Power. For every 3 fatigue points spent on an attempt, increase effective Power by 1, but *decrease* effective skill by 2. If the power is used for more than a minute, each extra minute costs another 3 fatigue points.

Extra effort cannot be used with super advantages.



## MENTAL SIGNATURES

Mental super-powers do not normally have an obvious *physical* effect. However, they leave a psychic "signature" which can be detected by those with the proper ability.

The Signature Sniffer advantage (see *GURPS Psionics*) can be used to detect the active use of any mental power. On a good enough roll, the sniffer will know who used the power and what for!

A Signature Sniffer who also has the Psychometry skill (see p. B174) can even detect *old* signatures on the area or item that was affected.

The enhancement of No Obvious Effect can be taken on any mental skill; this will eliminate the signature totally.

A super-power is represented on a character sheet as follows: Name-Skill(Power). Thus, Fireball at a skill of 12 and Power 10 would be written Fireball-12(10).

## MODIFYING SUPER-POWERS

Modifiers are used to customize a particular super-power to better fit a player's character conception. There are two types of modifiers – enhancements and limitations. An enhancement makes a super-power more useful – it might affect everything in a certain area, or perhaps have a longer range than normal. Limitations reduce the usability of a super-power – maybe it can be used only a few times a day, for example, or has a dangerous side effect.

Enhancements raise the cost of a super-power; limitations lower it. They are discussed on p. 32; the list begins on p. 49.

## LEARNING SUPER-POWERS

*Skill level* determines how well the character can control the power. It is purchased as for normal skills, but the designations Easy/Average/ Hard are not

used. All super skills are purchased according to the skill cost table (see below). Mental super-powers buy from IQ; physical ones buy from DX.

Eidetic Memory confers no advantage when purchasing super-skills.

When creating a super, there is no age limitation on the number of points that may be spent on super-skills, unless the GM chooses to set one. In general, it is assumed that almost any level of skill could have been acquired at the character's "origin."

### Your Final Skill Level      Point Cost

IQ-4 or DX-4	½ point
IQ-3 or DX-3	1 point
IQ-2 or DX-2	2 points
IQ-1 or DX-1	4 points
IQ or DX	8 points
IQ+1 or DX+1	12 points

### Your Final Skill Level      Point Cost

IQ+2 or DX+2	16 points
IQ+3 or DX+3	20 points
IQ+4 or DX+4	24 points
IQ+5 or DX+5	28 points
IQ+6 or DX+6	32 points
IQ+7 or DX+7	36 points

## IMPROVING SUPER-POWERS

As the campaign progresses, a super may spend his earned character points to improve his super-powers. This is quite in keeping with the genre; comic characters are constantly training their abilities (and often discovering new ones – see below).

A super may increase the strength of an ability by buying further levels of Power. Super skill level may also be increased as for normal skills, using the table above.

If a super-power has enhancements or limitations, the cost to improve Power will be varied up or down by the appropriate percentage.

A character may also improve an existing ability by adding new enhancements, or by reducing (or eliminating) limitations. Just figure the difference in point cost between the old version of the skill and the improved version.

## ADDING NEW SUPER-POWERS

A super can add new super-powers if he can justify it to the GM – there should be a good reason why a character can suddenly do things that he couldn't do previously. The more closely the new power is related to the existing ones, the more reasonable it is to allow it.

Likewise, a new super-advantage may be added if the GM agrees that it fits the character conception.

The GM may require (or even supply) a secondary "origin," often in the form of an interesting accident, if he likes the proposed new super-abilities but doesn't feel they fit the existing character history. See p. 6.

## RESISTANCE AGAINST SUPER-POWERS

Some super-powers may be resisted; this is noted in their descriptions. This resistance is always made versus *Power*, not skill level. (Note that telepathic psi powers are an exception. Resistance is rolled against Skill, because a weak but skillful psi may still be able to make an insidious attack.)

When resisting a Power of more than 16, living creatures resist as though it were only 16, thus eliminating "automatic victory over resistance."

## UNTRAINED (DEFAULT) USE OF SUPER-POWERS

Most super-powers cannot be used without training, even if you have a high Power level. This means that the character must put points into Skill. There are a few exceptions which have a *default* skill. These are noted in the individual power descriptions. Attack powers such as Fireball, for instance, can be used with Skill 0 – the super can always create a fireball at will. Unfortunately, he will have no chance of making it go where he wants it to until he has some skill.



## FATIGUE COST

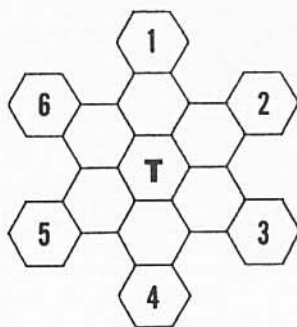
Most super-powers require no expenditure of energy, just as ordinary walking and talking require no significant effort.

A few powers are more strenuous. When use of an ability costs energy, it is always taken as *fatigue*; the amount of fatigue is specified in the description of each power. Note that super-powers are not treated like *GURPS* magic; a super cannot spend HT as energy to power his abilities, even if those abilities have been defined as "magic power."

Super-powers cost fatigue under the following circumstances:

- For an "extra effort" use of a power. See sidebar, p. 28.
- For any use requiring a Contest of Skills, *unless* the attacker wins the contest by 5 or more. In that case, the effort was so easy it cost no fatigue. This includes all resisted super-powers!
- For any power specifically requiring fatigue expenditure.
- On any critical failure, 1 fatigue *minimum* is spent.

## MISS DIRECTIONS



T = Target

Roll 1d for direction; 1 = the direction you are facing (missed long), 2 = the next direction clockwise, and so on. Counting from the targeted hex, move in the rolled direction the number of hexes that the skill roll was missed by.

For area attacks, that is the spot that is hit. For missiles, jets, and beams, draw a line between your hex, and that "target" hex., and let the attack continue along that line until it reaches its maximum range or hits something!

## CRITICAL SUCCESS AND FAILURE WITH SUPER-POWERS

Special critical success and failure effects are defined for some super-powers. For most, just use the following rules.

A critical success on a super-power roll never costs fatigue, even if the power normally uses fatigue. If the power is one which can normally be defended against, no physical defense is possible. If the power is one which can normally be resisted, no resistance roll is allowed.

The GM can allow any bonus or special effect that seems appropriate, depending on the power. Information-type powers, for instance, should give extra data on a critical success. Attacks against inanimate objects might bypass some or all of the DR, and so on.

Critical failure of a super-power costs 1d fatigue unless the power description says differently. In addition, powers that normally have no obvious effect will produce an obvious effect on a critical failure. Attacks will miss in a disastrous fashion, or bounce and damage the surroundings. Information powers will produce misinformation . . . and so on.

## EXAMPLES OF MODIFIERS

Modifiers allow the player to customize super-powers to exactly fit his conception of his character. For example, Razorboy wants to create a set of venomous claws. He starts by purchasing the Claws advantage at the 40-point level (p. 76). He then adds the Continuing Damage enhancement (+100% version), and links the Accessibility limitation "Only if attack penetrates DR" (-20% - see p. 52) to the Continuing Damage, bringing the total of the modifiers to  $100\% - 20\% = 80\%$ , for a total cost of  $40 \times 1.8 = 72$  points. Since he was enhancing an advantage, it doesn't have any Power as such; substitute Razorboy's HT for Power when figuring Duration.

A simpler example can be seen on Black Pearl's Control Fish super-power. She can control a lot of fish, not just a few at a time. She is buying the super-power at skill 16 and Power 15. The ability has a base LC 1. She starts with the Area Effect enhancement (+50%), which will allow her to control an 3-hex radius area (Power 15 divided by 5 = 3). She wants to increase this dramatically - she adds Increased Area  $\times 10$  (+200%), for a total radius of 13 (469 hexes!). Lastly, the fish are likely to be moving, so she purchases the Movable Area enhancement (+40%) so that she can direct them wherever she wishes. The total value of enhancements is 290%. Her base cost for 15 levels of Power is 15 points. This is increased 290% to 58.5 points, rounded up to 59.

Now she needs to buy the skill to use her power. She wants Skill 16. Since she has IQ 16, she is learning the skill at IQ level. Looking at the skill table, this costs 8 points.

The total cost for her super-power would be 67 points.

## SIZE OF AREA AFFECTED

For some skills (e.g., Neutralize Fire), the player must know the number of hexes in an area of a certain radius (r). The formula is  $3(r-1)+1$ . Size of the areas up to radius 14:

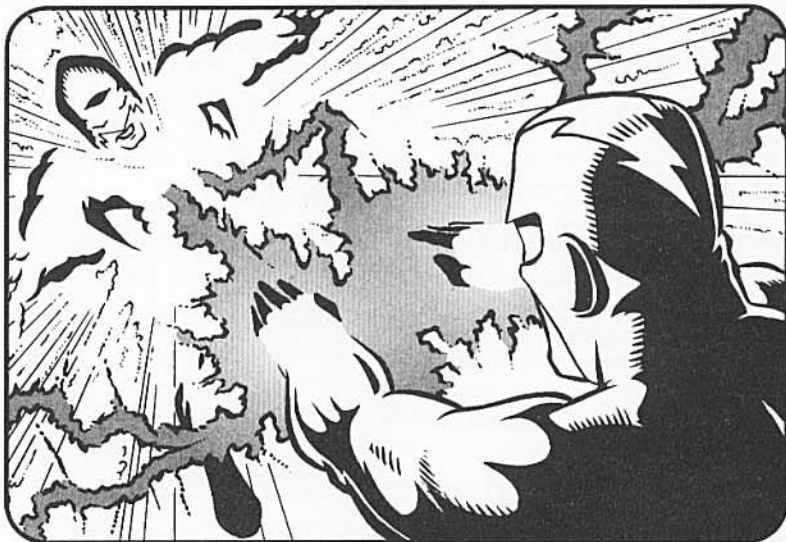
Radius 1, area 1	Radius 8, area 168
Radius 2, area 7	Radius 9, area 217
Radius 3, area 19	Radius 10, area 271
Radius 4, area 37	Radius 11, area 331
Radius 5, area 61	Radius 12, area 397
Radius 6, area 91	Radius 13, area 469
Radius 7, area 127	Radius 14, area 547

## USING A SUPER-POWER

Unless a super-power is bought with the "Instantaneous" enhancement (p. 50), it requires one turn of concentration (just like a spell) to invoke. Unlike a spell, the skill roll is not made until it is the PC's turn to act in the next turn. He then rolls to see if the power worked. Super-powers that do damage *always* work - a failed skill roll indicates that the target was missed! See the sidebar on p. 79 for information about accidental damage from super-combats. This differs from the use of magic in that it only takes one roll to determine if an attack hits.

Once the skill roll is made, the super is then free to act that turn (including concentration on a super-power to use in the *next* turn!).

Using a super-power does *not* count as an action for that turn. You may still concentrate, or move, or anything else. The only limitation is that you *cannot* invoke more than one power per turn (unless they are linked.) This doesn't prevent you from *using* more than one power simultaneously, but they must be activated one at a time.



## ATTACK POWERS AND TARGETING

All "attack powers" - that is, super-powers that can be "fired" - have a Snap Shot (SS) of 12 and a base Accuracy (Acc) of 1. Acc can be increased by buying the appropriate enhancement. Super-powers have a maximum range equal to  $10 \times$  Power hexes, and a  $\frac{1}{2}D$  equal to half the maximum. While some powers do no damage to halve, Acc bonuses are ignored past the  $\frac{1}{2}D$  point.

Attack powers are targeted just like ranged weapons, using the *Size, Speed, and Range Table* on p. B201.

If the attack misses, the result depends on the power being used (see below).

## TYPES OF ATTACK POWERS

There are two types of attack powers: Ranged and Area. They are used differently, and certain modifiers can only be used on certain types of attacks.

## RANGED ATTACK POWERS

This is the most common type of attack power. It affects one "target," usually determined by size, weight, or volume.



If the power is mental, a missed skill roll means the attack did not work or had no effect.

Physical attacks always work (unless limited by the *Fickle* or *Unreliable* limitation, pp. 53-54). A missed skill roll means the attack missed the target. Determine the direction and distance of the miss as shown in the sidebar, p. 29. If that location contains a target that the power could affect (GM's decision), it works against the accidental target. If nothing is present for the power to affect, nothing happens.

Jet and Missile powers fall into this category.

### AREA ATTACK POWERS

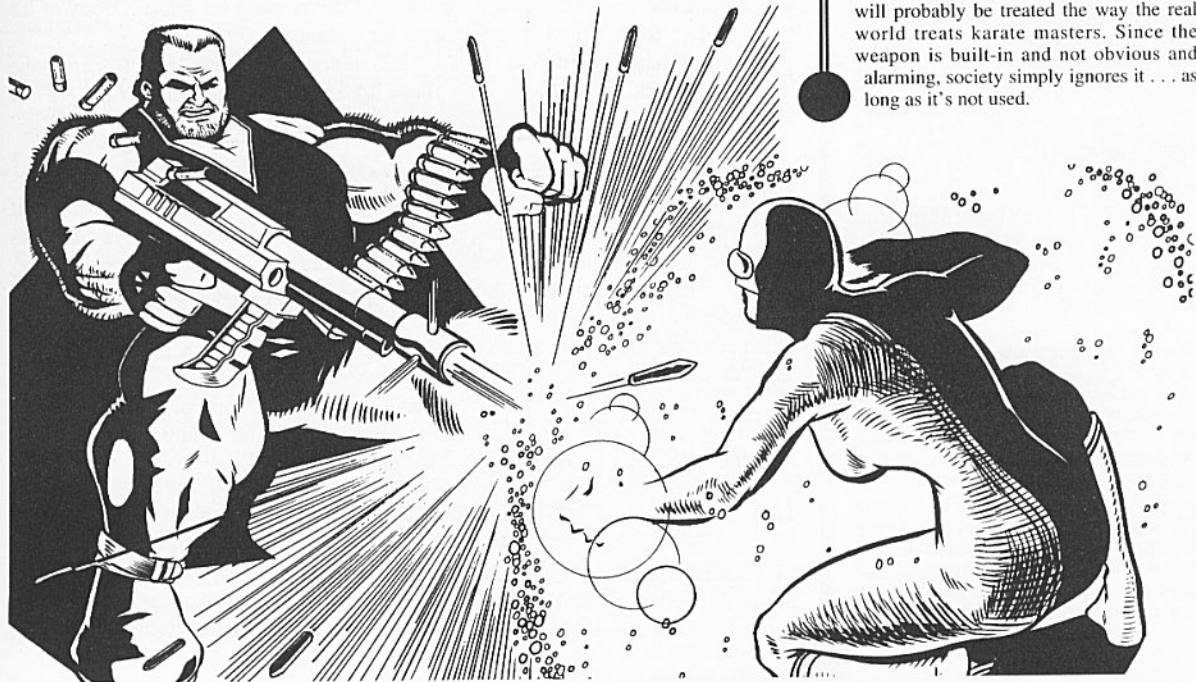
An *Area Effect* power normally suffers no targeting penalties for the firer's or target's speed – only for range. If the power is enhanced with the Movable Area modifier (p. 51), and the player wishes to attach it to a specific object rather than an area, then the full speed/size/range penalties are assessed.

If the roll is missed on an Area power, it *always* goes off somewhere. Determine the center of the effect using the same method as for Ranged skills.

*Example:* Bugmaster has just robbed a bank. To obscure his getaway, he attempts to put a cloud of smoke on a manhole cover in the street. One of his powers is Gnat Cloud (a modified version of the Smoke power) with an area radius of 3 and a skill of 10. Unfortunately, he gets a 15 on his skill roll, which is a serious miss! The direction die produces a 4, which means it fell short, and he missed his skill by 5, so it fell short by 5 hexes. Unless he was more than 8 hexes away, Bugmaster has just engulfed *himself* in a blinding cloud of gnats!

An Area Effect power has a base radius of 1 hex for every 5 levels of Power. This may be increased with the Increased Area enhancement (p. 50).

If someone is attacked with an Area attack, he can make a retreating Dodge. If successful, he can move one Step in any direction away from the center of the attack. This may be important on some explosive attacks, or if he was at the edge of the Area of Effect.



## THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

Some supers may take a "Rambo" attitude toward everyday life, stalking around in heavy armor, carrying .50-caliber machine guns as sidearms, or even wearing battlesuits to walk down the street. In most cases, society will frown on this. Even a super can't carry heavy weaponry in public without special permission!

Armor is not an offensive weapon, so it would be legal in most jurisdictions. But anyone wearing obvious armor will attract a *lot* of attention, and police may wonder whether someone dressed for trouble might be planning to start some . . .

Of course, not all armor is obvious. A super who is not bulletproof might be very wise to invest in a Kevlar vest worn under his costume, since otherwise a normal with a rifle could end his career quickly. Some supers might want to go even farther; a physically-normal mutant with mental powers would no doubt feel much safer in a battlesuit!

### NATURAL WEAPONS

The situation becomes more complicated for metahumans who have obvious natural weapons, such as teeth and claws. It would be reasonable for such a character to take a general reaction penalty as a disadvantage. Wolf-men and other "monsters," no matter how friendly, will frighten many people. They may be "invited out" of small towns, exclusive clubs, and other peaceful spots.

Supers who have special combat powers, like super-strength or beam attacks, will probably be treated the way the real world treats karate masters. Since the weapon is built-in and not obvious and alarming, society simply ignores it . . . as long as it's not used.

## FORCE FIELDS

One of the most common powers in the comic genre is the force field. For a pure force field that gives DR against all physical and energy attacks made against you only, buy Damage Resistance (see p. 38) and define the special effect as a force field. To defend versus certain attacks only, purchase the DR with a limitation, as per the chart. For instance, a force field that protects only against energy costs 2 per point of DR, rather than the full 3.

To create a force field that completely stops certain specific types of damage, buy the appropriate type of Invulnerability (p. 42).

To create a wall of force that will affect anything hitting it (for instance, to protect others), add the Wall enhancement to Damage Resistance. This will let you create a flat wall of any shape. The size of the wall will depend on HT (see p. 54, substituting HT for Power, to determine Area Affected, etc.).

To create a force-field of a controllable shape, buy the Wall enhancement twice. This will let you generate a field of any shape you like. To change its shape, make another skill roll.

*Example 1:* Darshan wishes to have a force dome with 40 points of DR. The base cost is 120 points. He adds the Area Effect (+50%) and Affects Others (+40%) enhancements for a 90% increase in cost – 228 points! He might want to take a few limitations to bring it down to a reasonable cost. (Note that without Affect Others, his force dome would still protect only him, even though its area might be larger.)

*Example 2:* Fireman is always invulnerable to fire/heat attacks (Invulnerability to Fire/Heat, 100 points). He can create a field of intense heat around his body that will affect bullets (DR 20 against Bullets Only (an "occasional" menace, 20 points), with the Unreliable limitation activating on 11 or less for a -20% limitation. Total cost, 16 points.

## DAMAGE FIELDS

Another staple of the comic genre is the damage field – an aura that radiates out from a villain (usually) and damages everyone within a certain radius.

This can be created by taking any attack skill and modifying it with the Area Effect and Always On enhancements. For instance, a radioactive villain could harm anyone he approached, or a glowing hero could blind everyone nearby.

## ENHANCEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

An *enhancement* is something that makes an advantage or super-power more useful – Area Effect, Armor Piercing, or No Obvious Effect, for example. A *limitation* makes a super-ability less useful – Limited Usage, Unreliable, and Touch Only are examples. *The GM is free to disallow any modifier that he feels is abusive or inappropriate for a particular ability!*

Enhancements and limitations are described in terms of a percentage. For example, a +20% enhancement reflects a 20% increase in the final cost for a particular super-power, rounded up.

Enhancements *add* to the cost; limitations *subtract* from the cost. Total all modifiers before determining final cost. For instance, a +20% enhancement and a -30% limitation result in a net -10% on cost.

Treat any total less than a net -75% as -75%. In other words, limitations may never reduce the cost of an advantage below 25% of its base cost.

*Example 1:* Using an example of Fireball-12(10) (LC 6), the unmodified cost would be 60 points for Power 10 ( $6 \times 10 = 60$ ). Adding a +20% enhancement, it would add 20% to this cost ( $.2 \times 60 = 12$  points) for a total of 72 points.

*Example 2:* If the character also added a -40% limitation, it would result in a final cost of -20%, for a point value of 48 ( $60$  minus  $12 = 48$  points).

## MODIFYING ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Super advantages and disadvantages may be modified just like super-powers – just apply the percent modifier to the final cost.

*Example:* Hyperion has Hyperflight at the 50-point level (see p. 41), but he wants it to affect everyone within 2 hexes of him (allowing the rest of his super team to travel with him). He adds the Affects Others (+40%, p. 49), Area Effect (+50%, p. 49), and Increased Area (+20%, p. 50), for a total of +110%. This results in a final cost of 105 points ( $1.1 \times 50 = 55$ , plus the original 50).

The GM should be consulted on the appropriateness of modifiers for super advantages and disadvantages. Some combinations make no sense – Body of Ice with the Explosive Effect enhancement, for instance!

Some modifiers (such as Area Effect) depend on Power level to determine how they work. When applying these to an advantage, substitute *HT* for *Power*.

## TURNING ENHANCEMENTS ON AND OFF

Each time a super uses an enhanced super-power, he can decide which (if any) enhancements to use. In the example above, Hyperion can always choose to *not* have his super-power affect others (ignoring the Affects Others enhancement), or have it only affect those within *one* hex (ignoring the Increased Area enhancement) before he takes off. The player must inform the GM which enhancements are being ignored *before* the roll is made to activate the ability. The "default" assumption is that they're always being used.

This allows a PC to effectively have multiple versions of the same super-power by simply tailoring which enhancements are used at any particular time. See the *Exclusivity* limitation, p. 53, for more information.

## LINKED ENHANCEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

One may "link" a set of enhancements to a set of limitations, in which case the limitations come into effect only when the enhanced version of the power is used. To do this, apply both sets of modifiers normally, but since enhancements linked to limitations still add a capability, they should cost points; the limitations

cannot reduce the net modifier for all linked traits to less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  the value of just the enhancements. If they would, use  $\frac{1}{4}$  the value of the enhancements instead.

*Example:* Explosive Effect (+40%) is linked to Recoil (-40%). Since the net modifier would be +0%,  $\frac{1}{4}$  the value of Explosive Effect is used instead, giving a final modifier of +10%.



## CREATING NEW SUPER-ABILITIES

Obviously, this book cannot cover every possible super-ability that a player could want . . . and inventing new abilities is part of the fun of the *Supers* genre, anyway! When the desired effect isn't covered here, either the player or the GM may invent new super advantages, disadvantages, powers, and modifiers.

## MODIFYING EXISTING ABILITIES

Start by looking for an existing super-ability with the same game effect as the one desired. Base the new ability on the existing one and define it with special effects.

For example, a player wishes to have a super who could knock down buildings with blasts from his trumpet. He could purchase Sonic Blast with the Accessibility limitation *Only When Playing the Trumpet*.

## LINKING POWERS TO POWERS

Sometimes a player will want to create a super-power that is really a combination of two other powers – for example, a cloud of smoke that disintegrates anything it touches (see the example in the sidebar). To do this, link the powers Disintegrate (see p. 59) and Smoke (see p. 64).

First, figure the point cost of each power if it were bought separately *at the same skill level*. Then, to enable the powers to be used in concert, the Link enhancement (see p. 51) is added to *both* of the powers. Add enhancements as necessary to make the powers “match” – for instance, if one has Area Effect, the other must also have Area Effect, for the same area. Since the skill levels are the same, only *one* skill roll is required to use the combined power. If the new power is improved later, the user must pay the increased skill and/or Power costs for all the underlying abilities.

Linked powers have the advantage of being invoked simultaneously – the super doesn't have to wait several turns to use several abilities. Linked powers may be used separately only if the Link was bought at the 20% level. If it was bought at 10%, the powers are permanently linked into one.

Any number of powers can be linked together – the only requirement is that each be bought with the Link enhancement.

## CREATING A NEW POWER: THE CLOUD OF DEATH

To create a disintegrating cloud at Power 10, you would first figure the cost for each power. Disintegrate would cost 80 points for Power 10, Smoke would cost 30.

You'd then have to purchase Disintegrate with the following enhancements: Link (+20%), Area Effect (+50%), and Continuing Damage (+50%). If you wanted the Disintegration effect to move, you'd also have to add Movable Area (+40%). This is a total of +160%, for a final cost of 208 points!

You would only have to add the Link (+20%) and the Movable Area (+40%) enhancements to the Smoke, as it is already an Area Effect power. That is +60%, for a final cost of 48 points.

Thus, for 256 points, you can Disintegrate everything in an area (and that area can move!), you can make a cloud of smoke, or you can combine the two!

If the Links were bought at the +10% level, you would have the power to create a disintegrating cloud of smoke, but *not* to use Disintegrate and Smoke separately, for 245 points.

Note that you could also define the smoke as a “special effect” of the disintegration. In that case, you would pay *no* extra points for it, but it wouldn't give any bonuses in combat. It would just be part of the character conception.

## TOTALLY NEW POWERS

If there's absolutely no way that one of the existing powers can be modified to fit the needs of a player or GM, one will need to be created.

The LC should range from 1 to 10. Trivial powers, or those that are only useful in *very* specialized circumstances, should have LC 1 or 2. The "average" power has LC 3-5 – this includes most defensive powers. Area powers, depending on potency, should have LC 6 or 7.

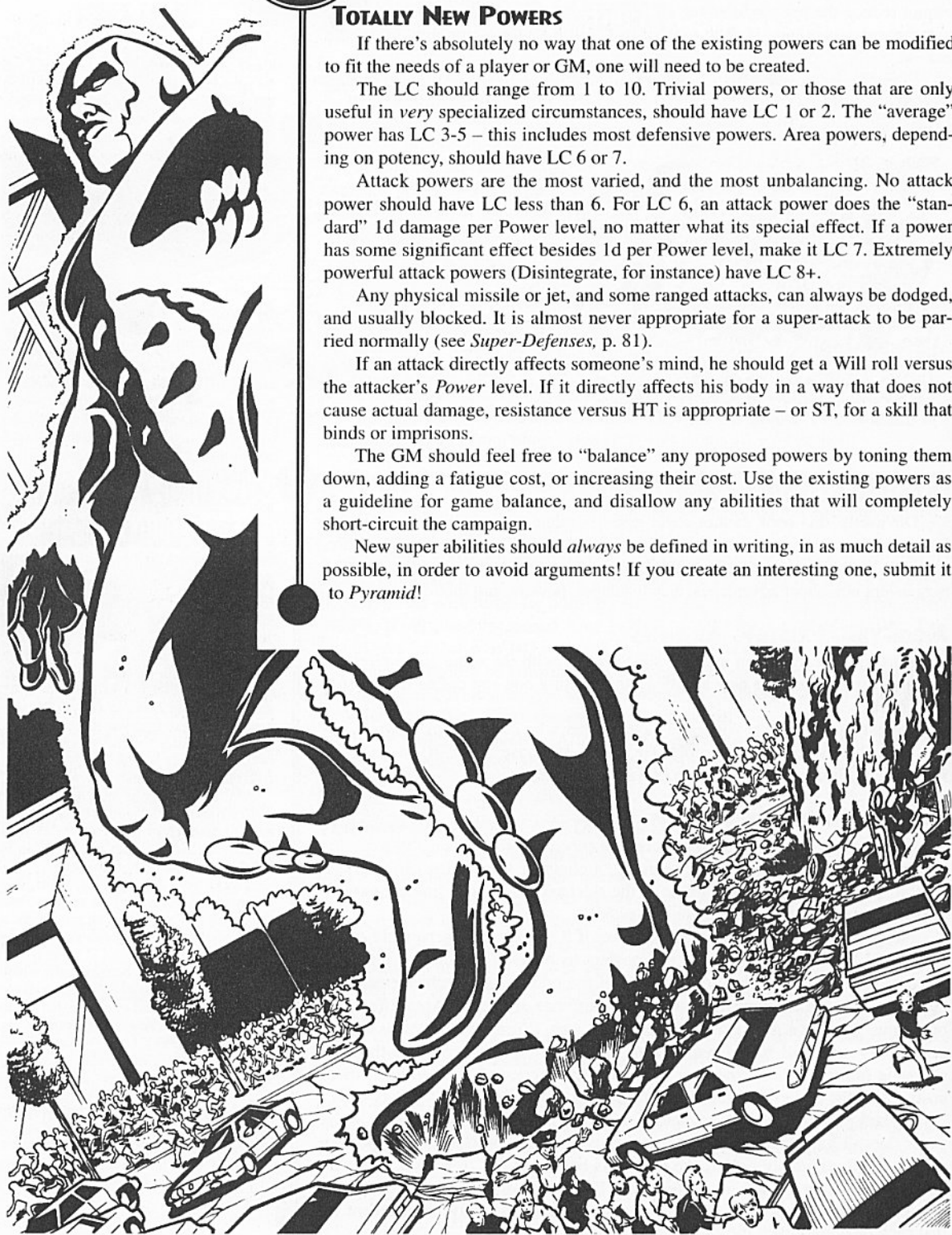
Attack powers are the most varied, and the most unbalancing. No attack power should have LC less than 6. For LC 6, an attack power does the "standard" 1d damage per Power level, no matter what its special effect. If a power has some significant effect besides 1d per Power level, make it LC 7. Extremely powerful attack powers (Disintegrate, for instance) have LC 8+.

Any physical missile or jet, and some ranged attacks, can always be dodged, and usually blocked. It is almost never appropriate for a super-attack to be parried normally (see *Super-Defenses*, p. 81).

If an attack directly affects someone's mind, he should get a Will roll versus the attacker's Power level. If it directly affects his body in a way that does not cause actual damage, resistance versus HT is appropriate – or ST, for a skill that binds or imprisons.

The GM should feel free to "balance" any proposed powers by toning them down, adding a fatigue cost, or increasing their cost. Use the existing powers as a guideline for game balance, and disallow any abilities that will completely short-circuit the campaign.

New super abilities should *always* be defined in writing, in as much detail as possible, in order to avoid arguments! If you create an interesting one, submit it to *Pyramid!*



## SUPER ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

These advantages and disadvantages are available only to metahumans, aliens, and others with appropriate Unusual Backgrounds.

### SUPER ADVANTAGES

Super advantages are metahuman abilities that require no training – if you have them, they work, with no need for a skill roll. However, some advantages (such as Growth, Regeneration, or Invisibility), are available in different forms or “levels,” at different point costs.

Super advantages are assumed to be *switchable* – the character can turn them on and off at will – but the default condition (while sleeping, unconscious, etc.) is *on*. This works like a super-power – spend one turn activating the ability, and it switches at the *beginning* of the following turn. Any advantage bought with the Instantaneous enhancement (see p. 50) can be switched on without any delay at all.

Some advantages can be modified to work on someone else (see *Affects Others*, p. 49). The base duration of such abilities is HT seconds. This can be increased with the Extended Duration enhancement (p. 50).

#### 360-DEGREE VISION 25 POINTS

You have a complete 360-degree field of vision. If you know the Karate skill, you can attack foes behind you at no penalty. Otherwise, treat “off-hand” hexes (typically left) and back hexes as -2 to hit (because of the clumsiness of the attack, not because you can’t see them). You suffer no penalties when defending against attacks from the side or rear, and your opponents gain no bonuses when attacking from behind.

#### ABSORPTION VARIABLE

You can absorb energy from an attack and use it to fuel your own powers! Every level of Absorption allows you to “soak up” 1d of damage from the appropriate type of attack into an “Absorption Battery,” and convert those points into character points for temporarily raising a Power or Attribute. Once these points have been allocated, they cannot be shifted elsewhere.



You can absorb a maximum of 6 points per level. For example, if you have 3 levels of Absorption, you could soak up a maximum of 18 points to be used for fueling a Power or Attribute. These points are lost again – unused ones first – at the rate of 1 per turn. Enhanced abilities are lost when the character points drain away.

After your battery is full, the Absorption acts like normal Damage Resistance (p. 38), at the rate of 2 points of DR per level of Absorption.

You must announce that you’re absorbing an attack *before* the damage dice are rolled so that the appropriate number can be separated for damage determination. You can never absorb your own attack.

#### DEFENSE TABLE

(SEE P. 38 FOR DR AND P. 44 FOR REFLECTION)

Frequency	DR	Reflection	Absorption
Against Everything	3	8	12
Common	2	6	10
Occasional	1	4	8
Rare	1/2	2	4
Very Rare	1/4	1	2

#### EXAMPLES OF DAMAGE TYPES:

Common: Crushing (most bullets, fists, maces, falling safes), Cutting/Impaling (knives, swords, arrows, spears), generic Energy, generic Psionic, generic Living Things, Metal.

Occasional: Air, Cold/Ice, Fire/Heat, Light, Earth, Electricity, Matter Control, Sonic, Bullets Only, Magic, Plants.

Rare: Alteration, Darkness, Vibration, Weather, Radiation, Acid, Poison.

Very Rare: Mud, Citrus Fruit, Insects, Cheese.

*Example:* The Crawling Horror has 6 levels of Absorption of Crushing Damage, and is hit with a round from a 7d rifle. It absorbs 6 dice of damage; the remaining 1d will affect it. If it absorbed 24 points of damage, it could spend these like character points, temporarily raising its DX from 10 to 12, and have 4 points left over. Its DX would remain 12 for 4 turns (as the extra 4 points drained away), then would drop to 11 for 10 turns, and finally back to 10 at the 15th turn after the initial absorption.

As long as the Horror continued to get hit with the rifle, its battery would continue to fill up until it reached a maximum capacity of 36 points (6 levels x 6 points per level). At this point, it would have 36 points to spend in raising an Attribute or Power.

*Special Limitation:* If absorbed points can only go to *one* attribute or power, determined when the character is created, this is a -20% limitation.

#### ALTERED TIME RATE VARIABLE

You experience the flow of time at a rate that differs significantly from the norm. If your rate of time perception is faster than a normal human’s, this is an advantage: for 100 points, you experience time twice as fast as a normal: two seconds are “lived” for each real second that passes. For each additional second, add 100 points.

Altered time allows you the luxury of extensive planning even in crisis situations, as everything seems to happen in slow motion. Any mental skill or perception roll may be attempted at no penalty to additional actions. Exceptions to this are Fast-Talk, Diplomacy, or any other skill which requires interaction

with another person (unless they also have Altered Time Rate at the same level you do!).

Each level of increased time rate allows you to take one additional maneuver. Maneuvers that depend on the reaction of another person (Feint, for instance) cannot be taken – others can't react in the short time allowed!

Altered Time Rate can also be a disadvantage. For -100 points, you experience only 1 subjective second for every 2 real seconds that pass. You may take one action every other turn. You may only take one level of decreased time rate.

### **AMPHIBIOUS**

**10 POINTS**

You function as well in water as on dry land. You don't need the Swimming skill (p. B49); you automatically swim at your normal Move rate. This is a prerequisite for the Super Swimming skill (see p. 46). You must still breathe, though! Take the Gills advantage (below) if you want to breathe underwater.

### **BODY OF AIR**

**50 POINTS**

Your body is a smoky form in the shape of a human. You may carry nothing with you, except your costume if you have the Costume advantage. Your Move is half normal, but you can go up or down at will, and can slip through the narrowest of cracks.

If you are outdoors, every 5 mph of wind will move you 1 hex/turn in the direction it is blowing – if that's the direction you wish to travel in, it will add to your Move! Otherwise your Move will go down as you try to fight against the breeze.

In this form you cannot be hit by ordinary weapons, but are vulnerable to all energy, psionic, and magical attacks. You cannot wield any physical weapons, but can use your super-abilities normally otherwise. All knockback from a Wind Blast or Wind Jet (see p. 65) is doubled, and if a Vacuum (see p. 65) is created in your hex you take 3d damage. A Whirlwind (see p. 65) will do 1d damage per turn that you remain within its radius unless you were the creator.

*Special Enhancement:* Objects may be carried. They take on the changed form when they are picked up, and regain normal form when put down. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

*Special Limitation:* You cannot switch out of Body of Air form. This is usually inconvenient, and often crippling! This is not a percentage limitation; treat an unswitchable Body of Air as a *disadvantage* worth -30 points. If you can carry objects, use the percentage value of the enhancement to lower the cost of the disadvantage. For instance, if you could carry objects of Medium encumbrance, the value of the disadvantage would be reduced by 50%, to -15 points.

### **BODY OF EARTH**

**40 POINTS**

Your body is made of earth or sand. This will prevent cutting or impaling attacks by normal weapons from doing any extra damage above their base. You can alter the form of your body to fit into an oddly-shaped space, or flatten into a thin stream of dirt or sand to move through a small opening. It takes 2 turns to change your shape in this manner. You cannot imitate other people or creatures with this ability, however, as your control is not that fine.

All water-based attacks do an extra 50% damage against you, figured *after* DR is subtracted.

*Special Limitation:* You cannot switch out of Body of Earth form. This is not especially crippling, although you look

peculiar. -10%, plus the potential of Ugly or Hideous Appearance.

### **BODY OF FIRE**

**5 POINTS/LEVEL**

Your body is covered with flames, from which you take no damage. Anything you touch has a good chance of igniting immediately (determined by the GM). You have an extra DR 1 against Heat/Fire attacks for every 2 full levels of this advantage, and an extra DR 1 against bullets for every 5 levels.

All cold or water-based attacks do an extra 50% damage against you, calculated *after* DR is subtracted.

The temperature of the flames is 500°, plus 25° per level. Even the weakest flame will ignite matches, paper, and so on; to melt or ignite other things, more temperature may be required. See the sidebar on p. 21 for a list of common melting points.

You can do damage with your body alone. For each 3 levels, you do 1 extra point of burn damage when you strike with your hands. For each 10 levels, you do 1d of burn damage per turn to anyone in your hex (minimum 1d).

*Special Limitation:* You cannot switch out of Body of Fire form; you are a human fire-elemental, and must live in a cave or an asbestos house. This is grossly inconvenient for you, and dangerous for others. -40%.



### **BODY OF ICE**

**25 POINTS**

A malleable coating of ice covers your body, making you immune to the effects of cold temperature, and adding 5 DR.

All punching and kicking damage is increased by 2 points, but attempts to grapple (or to be grappled) are at -4.

All fire or heat-based attacks do an extra 50% damage against you, figured *after* DR is subtracted.

*Special Limitation:* You cannot switch out of Body of Ice form. This is often inconvenient, and will end your social life. -60%.

### **BODY OF METAL**

**9 POINTS/LEVEL**

Your body is composed of metal. You get PD 1 for every 3 levels (maximum PD 6) and DR 1 per level. Damage from your punches and kicks is raised by +2, but your Move is reduced by 20%. Sonic and vibratory attacks are automatically "armor-piercing" against you. You are considered "ferrous" with respect to Magnetism.

*Special Enhancement:* Your body is non-ferrous. +10%.

*Special Enhancement:* Your body's metal is amorphous rather than crystalline, and suffers no extra effect from sonic or vibratory attacks. +30%.

*Special Limitation:* You cannot switch out of Body of Metal form. This is not especially crippling, though you look peculiar. -20%, plus the potential of Ugly or Hideous Appearance; however, a metal body might also be sleek and attractive.

## BODY OF STONE

**8 POINTS/LEVEL**

Your body is made of rock! You gain PD 1 for every 4 levels (maximum PD 6) and DR 2 for every 3 levels. Damage from your punches and kicks is raised by +2, but your Move is reduced 20%. Sonic and vibratory attacks are automatically "armor-piercing" against you.

**Special Enhancement:** Your body's stone is amorphous rather than crystalline, and does not suffer the extra effect from sonic or vibratory attacks, +30%.

**Special limitation:** You cannot switch out of Body of Stone form. This is not especially crippling, though you look peculiar. -25%, plus the potential of Ugly or Hideous Appearance.

## BODY OF WATER

**40 POINTS**

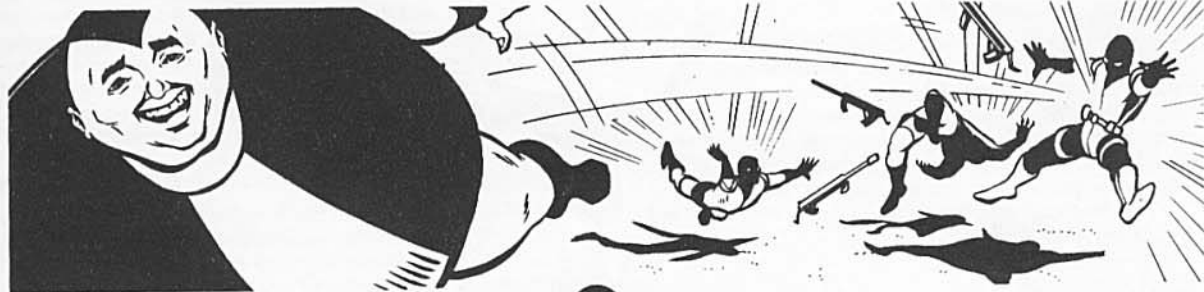
Your body is made of water, kept roughly man-shaped by surface tension. Normal crushing weapons will do half normal damage; normal cutting, impaling, and missile weapons will do 1 point damage per hit (regardless of DR). Dehydration or fire-based attacks do *double* damage (figured after DR is subtracted).

You may use any super-abilities normally, but normal physical skills are at -8. You can alter your form into anything from a puddle to a water bottle, if your volume remains unchanged.

You can enter water without being harmed. You will not become invisible, but you will be at -4 to be seen - a vague mist moving through the water at your normal swimming speed.

**Special Enhancement:** Objects may be carried. They take on the changed form when they are picked up, and regain normal form when put down. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

**Special limitation:** You cannot switch out of Body of Liquid form. This is usually inconvenient, and often crippling! This is not a percentage limitation; treat an unswitchable Body of Liquid as a *disadvantage* worth -20 points. If you can carry objects, use the percentage value of the enhancements to lower the cost of the disadvantage, as described for Body of Air.



## BOUNCING

**12 POINTS/LEVEL**

Your body is rubbery and bouncy. For every level of Bouncing, you get DR 1 vs. crushing damage. For every 5 full levels, you get an additional PD of 1 (maximum PD 6) versus any physical attack. Every three levels gives you one level of Super Jump (p. 46).

Use the Jumping skill to initiate and control a bounce. In general, your bounce distance is 90% - if you jump from a 10-story building, you can bounce to the top of a nine-story one. You must make at least one full 90% bounce after any vertical fall, though you can go in any direction. You do not have to bounce after a horizontal bounce or a jump; you can make a short bounce, or just stop.

You take no damage from *intentional* rebounds from inanimate objects, as long as you make your Jumping roll. You can jump out of an airplane and, *if you roll well*, you'll be unhurt. But slams, failed rolls, and uncontrolled bounces cause normal damage. Note that the Super Jump ability gained free with each 3 levels of Bouncing will reduce the damage you take if you do fail a roll after you fall.

For slam attacks, each level of Bouncing works like a level of Increased Density (p. 41). When someone fails a slam against a foe with Bouncing, he is knocked back 1 hex per point he failed by (e.g., 3 hexes if he fails his slam roll by 3). If you want to Slam someone by *bouncing into them*, you must make a Jumping roll to hit them, before any other Slam rolls.

**Special Limitation:** You get none of the Super Jumping abilities; you must jump off something to bounce. -25%.

## BREATH HOLDING

**2 POINTS/LEVEL**

Each level doubles the length of time that a super can hold his breath (see p. B91). This advantage can be combined with the Breath Control skill (p. B48).

## BROADCAST

**3 POINTS/LEVEL**

The Radio Hearing advantage (p. 44) is a prerequisite. You can broadcast on any radio frequency you can hear. To find out your range in miles, square your level of Broadcast.

**Example:** Broadcast level 10 would cost 30 points and allow you to broadcast in a 100-mile radius.

**Special Enhancement:** Video Broadcast. You can transmit, via UHF or VHF signal, a video of anything you can see. +40%.

## CATFALL

**10 POINTS**

You subtract 5 yards from a fall automatically (this is considered an automatic Acrobatics success; don't check again for it). A successful DX roll *halves* all damage taken from a fall.

## CHAMELEON

**7 POINTS/LEVEL**

You can blend into your surroundings. In any situation where being seen is a factor, you have an additional +2 per level to your Stealth skill if you are perfectly motionless, or +1 if you are moving. This will not help you in the dark, or against someone who is listening rather than depending on sight! Unless you have the Costume advantage, your clothing remains normal, cutting your bonus to +1, with no bonus if you are moving.

**Special Limitation:** You cannot turn this ability off. Strangers will react at -1; the flickering effect is irritating. Reduce the final cost by 5 points.

## CLAWS

**SEE P. 76**

## CLINGING

25 POINTS

You can walk or crawl up walls or on the ceiling. Your Move is halved while using this advantage. You can stop at any point and stick to the surface without any fear of falling.

If you are falling and try to grab a wall to keep from hitting the ground, the GM must decide if it is within reach. If it is, a successful DX roll is needed to touch the wall. Once the wall has been grabbed, a successful ST roll must be made, modified at -1 for each 5 yards fallen. If the ST roll is failed, 5 yards are subtracted from the distance because of the slowing effect the failed clinging attempt had on the fall.

*Example:* The Crawling Horror is knocked off a building 30 yards high. The GM rules it will have a chance to grab the wall at the 15-yard point. It rolls against its DX 14 and grabs the wall. It would then have to make a ST-3 roll to hold on.

*Special Limitation:* You can only cling to one particular substance. -30% for common materials like wood, rock, brick, or metal. -50% for rare materials such as ice, rubber, etc.

## COSTUME

15 POINTS

This advantage, a staple in comic campaigns, should be unavailable in a realistic campaign. Your costume can work with (and is immune to damage from) your own powers. If you stretch, your costume stretches with you; if you ignite your body, your costume doesn't burn. This only grants the *costume* immunity! It doesn't burn when you flame on. It also won't be hurt by a flamethrower . . . but it will not protect you from a flame attack! If your costume gives any bonuses other than non-interference with and immunity to your own powers, it should be paid for as outlined in *Gadgeteering* (see Chapter 3).

## DAMAGE RESISTANCE

3 POINTS/LEVEL

This functions like the Toughness advantage (see p. B23), but can be purchased in as many levels as desired. This DR will protect against both physical and energy attacks, but will not aid versus mental attacks such as Mental Blow. This may be armor, or a force field, or thick skin, or any other mechanism chosen when the character is created.

This advantage may be purchased with a limitation "only to certain types of damage." See the *Defense Table* on p. 35.

*Special Limitation:* Ablative DR, -15%. When an attack strikes ablative DR, every 10 points of basic damage rolled removes one point of DR, regardless of whether or not the attack penetrates DR. Lost DR "heals" at the same rate as lost HT. Characters who want their DR to regenerate more quickly may take Regeneration. A character may put a layer of ablative DR under normal DR, in which case only the damage that penetrates the normal DR reduces the ablative DR.

*Example:* Blackshield, above, regenerates his ablative DR at the rate of 1 point per hour. His base DR 8 would cost 24 points (8x3), and his ablative DR would cost 15 points (10x1.5).

*Special Enhancement:* Hardened DR, +30% per level. Each level of Hardened (up to 2) cancels out one level of Armor Piercing from an attack. It has no other effect.

If attacked by a weapon that normally ignores all or part of a target's DR, Hardened DR is unaffected by such reductions.

*Example:* A Gyroc Carbine (see *GURPS Ultra-Tech*) normally does 8d(2) damage - the target's DR is divided by 2 before the 8d damage is applied. Hardened armor would ignore this divisor.

## DARK VISION

5 POINTS

You can see in absolute darkness. You suffer no skill penalties for darkness, no matter what its origin. Anyone using either this advantage or Night Vision is color-blind while in darkness.

*Special Enhancement:* You can see colors in the dark. +20%.

## DISCRIMINATORY SMELL

15 POINTS

You can differentiate between (and recognize) people, places, and things by their odors. You have a sense of smell far beyond the human norm, and can determine distinctive odors for practically everything and anything you may encounter. You may memorize an odor by sniffing it for at least one minute and making a successful IQ roll. If you fail this roll, you may not attempt to memorize that odor again for at least one full day.

In any situation where you may utilize your sense of smell, you are at +4 (plus any Acute Smell bonuses) to the roll, and receive +4 to Tracking skill.

*Special Enhancement:* You can detect a person or animal's emotional state by odor. This effectively gives you the Empathy advantage if you can get within 2 hexes of the subject. +50%.

*Special Limitation:* One particular substance has a particularly offensive odor to you. If you encounter it, you must make a HT roll or become temporarily ill, losing 1d from each stat while in the presence of the odor and for 30 minutes thereafter. This is a -50% limitation for common substances (pollution, dogs, cigarette smoke, car exhaust), -20% for occasional (wildflowers, cigar smoke), -10% for rare (one particular brand of perfume, a specific breed of cat). It is a 1-point quirk for something very rare (rotten eggs, yak hair).



## DOESN'T BREATHE

20 POINTS

Your body absorbs the oxygen that it needs through osmosis. You can't be strangled, and are immune to most gases (your body won't absorb anything that will hurt it). You will still suffocate in a vacuum, or anywhere else where there is no oxygen available to absorb. You can live underwater as long as the water has oxygen in it (normal Earth bodies of water have plenty of oxygen). You can use breathing equipment in space, as your lungs are capable of working normally.

## DOESN'T EAT OR DRINK

10 POINTS

You don't require food to stay alive - your body is powered in some other manner. The GM should require the player to explain what this is: photosynthesis, solar power, etc.

## DOESN'T SLEEP

20 POINTS

You never have to sleep. You can ignore all fatigue losses from missed nights of rest.



## DUPLICATION

This allows you to split into two or more bodies ("Dupes"), each possessing your full knowledge and powers. For an additional 25 points per copy, your Dupes can be in constant telepathic contact.

When your Dupes re-merge, your HT is the average of the current HT of the merged forms. Everything experienced by any Dupe is remembered by your re-combined self. If one of your Dupes is killed, all the others immediately take 2d damage and are stunned (roll vs. IQ-6 to recover).

Dupes do *not* get copies of your equipment (except for a costume if you have the Costume advantage, p. 38). If your costume includes gadgets (like powered armor), your Dupes don't get copies of it even if you *do* have the Costume advantage. If you spend the money and/or points to purchase *two* copies of a piece of equipment, then the GM should let a Dupe appear with the item.

If one of your Dupes is killed, you lose the appropriate number of character points. The GM may allow you to *spend* 75 accumulated character points to buy back your dead Dupe.

*Example:* A 250-point character that had a 75-point Dupe killed would become a 175-point character. If the GM agrees, the player could spend 75 earned character points and regain the Dupe.

*Special Enhancement:* If one of your Dupes is killed, the others are not stunned or hurt. +20%.

*Special Limitation:* Your dupes do not share your full HT; instead, it is divided evenly between them, rounding up. For instance, HT 15 would divide into two dupes of HT 8 each, or three of HT 5, or four of HT 4. Extra hit points are divided in the same way. When your forms re-combine, add their HT instead of averaging, losing any extra points gained when fractions were rounded up. -40%.

## ENHANCED DX

All attributes other than ST are bought at normal cost. Any time an attribute is raised above 20, all default skill rolls are figured as if that attribute were 20. This prevents defaults from becoming unbalancing!

## ENHANCED HT

SEE ENHANCED DX, ABOVE AND EXTRA HIT POINTS, BELOW

## ENHANCED IQ

SEE ENHANCED DX, ABOVE

## ENHANCED ST

VARIES

Regular *GURPS* ST is designed around a bell-curve - an attribute of 20 represents the peak of human condition. In the *Supers* genre, this bell curve isn't appropriate, as there is no real limit (at least in the comics) as to how strong someone can be.

Enhanced ST is *only* available to someone who has paid an Unusual Background cost to be a super. If the GM doesn't charge a UB, he has no complaint coming when rules lawyers gleefully point out that it is cheaper to buy ST 19 with Enhanced ST than it is to buy ST 18 with regular ST!

The cost of Enhanced ST is 60 for ST 15, plus 10 per point of ST from 16-23, then 5 per point of ST from 24-30, then 1/2 per point of ST from 31+.

*Examples:* ST 18 would cost  $60 + (3 \times 10) = 90$  points. ST 27 would cost  $60 + (8 \times 10) + (4 \times 5) = 160$ . ST 250 would cost 285 points.

*GM Note:* This power encourages lots of PCs with unusually high ST. If this doesn't fit the campaign, raise the cost (of either Enhanced ST or the Unusual Background) or eliminate it entirely!

## 75 POINTS/COPY

## STRENGTH COST

ST	Cost
15	60
16	70
17	80
18	90
19	100
20	110
21	120
22	130

ST	Cost
23	140
24	145
25	150
26	155
27	160
28	165
29	170
30	175
31+	+1/2 point per point

## EXTRA FATIGUE

3/POINT

Your fatigue is higher than normal for your ST. You can run farther and fight longer than others, and you have more power available for powering magical spells. Extra fatigue goes into a separate pool that can be used to power super-powers, psionics, extra effort, or magical spells. This pool recharges at the same rate as normal fatigue, but will only begin to regain points if regular fatigue (based on ST) has been completely regained first.

## EXTRA HIT POINTS

5/POINT

You can take more damage than a normal human of your HT. Hit Points are initially equal to HT, so a character with HT 14 could buy his Hit Point total up to 20 for 30 points. This would be written as HT 14/20. Any roll versus HT, Contests of HT, resistances, calculation of unconsciousness and survival rolls, and anything else involving HT would be made against his health of 14. Only damage is subtracted from 20.

If the Stun Damage Only optional rule (p. 84) is in effect, Stun is based on hit points, not basic HT.

*Example:* If a super has HT 14/20, he would have to roll to stay alive at -14 HT (and every -5 thereafter) rather than at -20.

## EXTRA LIFE

25 POINTS PER LIFE

For each Extra Life you purchase, you may come back from death (see *Resurrection*, p. 44) *once*. In a cinematic campaign, an Extra Life may be purchased with earned experience, whether you had this advantage initially or not. No matter *how* sure your foes were that they killed you, you didn't really die! The details are between the player and the GM.

You may not have both Extra Lives and Resurrection.

## EXTRA STUN

VARIABLE

If the optional Stun Damage rule (p. 84) is being used, you may purchase extra Stun points at the rate of 1/2 to 2 points per extra point of Stun, at the GM's discretion. If Extra Hit Points are allowed, then Extra Stun should only cost 1/2 point per level.

## FLEXIBILITY

15 POINTS

You can bend your body in absolutely any direction. It is like Double-Jointedness (p. B20) only more so; you cannot take both this and Double-Jointedness. You get a +5 on any Climbing roll, on any roll to escape from restraints, or on any Mechanic roll. You cannot stretch or squeeze yourself abnormally, but any part of your body can bend any way. This power is included in the normal cost of Stretching (p. 46).

## FLIGHT

## 40 POINTS

This advantage allows you to swoop through the air like a bird or a plane. Your flight speed is equal to *twice* your normal move, plus any levels of the Super Flight advantage you have (see p. 46). This allows you to fly, but doesn't confer the ability to do complex acrobatics and tight turns; for that, you need Flight skill. See sidebar, p. 24, and p. B139 for more details.

Anyone capable of self-propelled flight (*not* Winged Flight) can "fly" at half speed underwater.

**Flight as a Gadget Advantage:** Gadgets incorporating Flight are built on a base speed of 10, plus any Super Flight.

**Special Variation:** See *Matter Surfing*, p. 42.

**Special Limitation:** Winged Flight. Your Flight advantage comes from large, functional wings. Wingspan is at least twice your height. In order to take off, land, or maneuver, you must have an open area with a radius equal to your wingspan in all directions. If your wings are bound, or if a wing is hit and crippled, you cannot fly. (To determine a hit to the wing, assume any hit to an arm has a 50% chance of hitting the matching wing instead). -25%.

**Special Limitation:** Gliding. You cannot gain altitude while flying. You descend at 1 hex per turn. Enhanced Move does not affect your speed, but each level halves your descent rate. -50%.

**Special Limitation:** Controlled Gliding. As above, but you can gain altitude if you can find an updraft, or "thermal," to ride. A normal thermal will raise a glider 1 hex per turn. Make an IQ roll (one attempt per minute) to locate thermals if any are present. -45%.

**Special Limitation:** Cannot Hover. *Not available for Gliding; a glider can't hover anyway.* You must always move at at least half your maximum speed when you fly. -15%.

**Special Limitation:** You cannot fly very high. -10% for a 30-foot ceiling, -20% for a 10-foot ceiling, -25% for a 5-foot ceiling. This does not limit speed in any way, but the GM may require Flight rolls to dodge obstacles near the ground!

## FULL COORDINATION

## 50 POINTS/ATTACK

This is the ability to make more than one physical attack per turn, using each limb only once. So, for instance, a creature with four arms could buy Full Coordination/1 and make two attacks per turn, FC/2 and make three attacks per turn, or FC/3 and make four attacks per turn, using each arm once.

Note that a two-armed creature could take this advantage, too. It could then attack once each turn with each hand, at no penalty! Physical attacks are limited to punches, kicks, or weapon attacks, not super physical skills.

When someone with Full Coordination makes an All-Out Attack, he may take one bonus for each weapon he uses, but all bonuses must be the same. You could not, for instance, swing twice with one weapon while aiming carefully with another! If you choose to increase your number of attacks, you get 50% more attacks than normal, rounding down.

**Example:** A brawler with two arms and FC/1 who took an All-Out Attack could make *three* attacks: two normal plus one bonus attack.

His normal cousin, with FC/3 and *four* arms, could make 2 additional attacks with an All-out Attack.

To aim two weapons at once requires the Independently Focusable Eyes advantage (see p. 41).

## GILLS 10 POINTS

You have the ability to extract oxygen from water, allowing you to remain submerged indefinitely in normal water. If there is no oxygen to extract, you will suffocate like any normal

person. You can't breathe in a swimming pool full of ketchup! You can still breathe normally out of the water.

## GROWTH

## 10 POINTS/LEVEL

You have the ability to grow to an enormous size - 20', 30', or even more! As your size increases, so must your ST (or you'd collapse, unable to support your own weight). Your equipment doesn't change size - unless you have the Costume advantage (p. 38), you are going to be a very large nude...

Each level of Growth costs 10 points, and allows you to increase your size by a factor of 100%, based on your original height. It takes you one turn to increase your size by one level.

**Example:** A 6-foot-tall super has 4 levels of Growth. This would allow an increase in height of 24' (6'x4), to a maximum height of 30'.

If you attempt to grow in a room, vehicle, container, etc. that isn't large enough to hold you, your growth normally stops. However, if your *maximum* thrust damage is enough to penetrate the wall or ceiling's DR, you will burst through it in 1 turn per point of DR the surface possesses.

You must buy the Enhanced ST to support your form separately - each additional level of Growth requires more ST than the previous level. If the ST only activates at a certain size, you receive a cost reduction based on how big you must be to use it - after all, ST 250 isn't nearly as useful if you can only use it when you're 50' tall! See the chart below.

Levels of Growth	Minimum ST	Cost Reduction
1	20	-10%
2	36	-20%
3	56	-30%
4	90	-40%
5	150	-50%
6	240	-60%
7	350	-60%
8	500	-60%
+1	+150	-60% (maximum limitation)

**Example:** Weed is 6' tall, has ST 10, and purchases 4 levels of Growth (40 points). When he is less than 12' tall (below the first level of Growth) he keeps his normal ST 10. At 12 feet (the first level), his ST must be at least 20. Since he only gets a -10% limitation on ST purchased for this level, he buys it at the minimum, 20, for a cost of 99 points (110 points -10%). At 18' (the second level), he needs 16 more points of ST (to bring it up to ST 36). The normal cost of those added ST points would be 68 points, but he'd get a 20% discount on them.

Looking at this, he decides that he wants the full ST 90 (the ST needed to support 4 levels of Growth) available from the time he's 18' (2 levels) tall. Instead of buying 16 extra points, he buys 70 extra ST for a cost of 76 points, (normally 95, -20% because this ST kicks in at Level 2).

He has now spent a total of 215 points (40 for Growth, 99 for the first batch of ST, 76 for the second batch). He can grow up to 30' tall, and has ST 90 as soon as he reaches 18' tall.

**Special Limitation:** Maximum size only. If you can only switch between normal height and your maximum, you may apply the same cost reduction from the chart above to the Growth ability itself.

**Example:** In the above case, Weed would figure the total point cost for ST 90 and 4 levels of Growth (40+205=245). He would then apply the -40% limitation (245-98=147) for a final cost of 147 points.

This makes huge, incredibly strong supers relatively cheap – but they're also very easy to hit, and will have a hard time using their super-power indoors!

**Other Advantages:** At the player's and GM's discretion, other advantages such as Extra Hit Points, Increased Density, etc., could be associated with Growth. If so, they should be bought with the same cost reduction from the chart.

### **HARD TO KILL**

**5 POINTS/LEVEL**

You are incredibly difficult to kill. Each level of this advantage confers a +1 on all HT rolls made for survival. If you miss your normal HT roll, but make it with your Hard to Kill bonus added in, you *appear* dead (a successful Diagnosis roll will reveal signs of life), but will come to in the normal 1 hour per point of negative HT.

**Example:** Blackthorne has HT 12 and 4 levels of Hard to Kill. He is hit by an LAW rocket doing 30 points damage, reducing his HT to -18. This will require him to make 2 HT rolls to stay alive (one at -12, then one at -17).

He rolls an 11 for the first one – no problem, still alive. On the second roll, he gets a 14. This is above his regular HT (12), but below his modified HT (12 + 4 levels of Hard to Kill). He passes out, and is left for dead by his foes. Roughly a day later, he'll regain consciousness – still injured, but not dead!

### **HYPERFLIGHT**

**50/75 POINTS**

**PREREQUISITE: SUPER FLIGHT (P. 46)**

You may fly at or *beyond* the speed of light. This ability *cannot* be safely used in an atmosphere – the friction would destroy *anyone*. Exception: an Insubstantial character can use Hyperflight in atmosphere, or even through walls.

Your speed depends on the amount of Super Flight you have. At the 50-point version, Hyperflight allows you to travel at one times the speed of light (c) for each level of Super Flight.

**Example:** A character with 3 levels of Super Flight purchases Hyperflight for 50 points. He can now travel at 3c (three times the speed of light).

For 75 points, each level of Super Flight translates into one light year *per day* of flight, allowing massive distances to be covered.

You must first accelerate to your full normal flight speed, then you may kick in FTL travel. You can thereafter switch freely between FTL and normal speeds – no inertia carries over between switches.

Absolute concentration is required, and nothing that requires conscious attention (including activating super skills) may be used. You cannot turn or maneuver; if you wish to do so, you must drop to normal flight speed. Items thrown or dropped by a Hyperflying character instantly slow to his maximum normal flight speed – a baseball cannot be thrown at 10 times the speed of light to take out a space station!

Similarly, if you collide with anything more substantial than an interstellar cloud, you immediately stop, without harm to yourself or the object hit.

You must have some method, either technological or a super-advantage, of surviving in the vacuum of space!

**Special Enhancement:** You can maneuver while Hyperflying. +10%.

**Special Limitation:** You perceive only a brilliant blur around you (*Star Wars*-style effect) and cannot clearly navigate. All Astrogation rolls are at -6. -30%.

### **ICE SKATES**

**5 POINTS**

You can move normally on ice – no DX penalties are incurred for bad or slippery footing. This is especially important if you are going to be using the Super Running advantage on ice.

### **IMMORTALITY**

**140 POINTS**

You'll never die of natural causes and are tough to kill unnaturally! This advantage is just a combination of Instant Regeneration, Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison, and Unaging.

### **IMMUNITY TO POISON**

**15 POINTS**

You are immune to the effect of any toxins. This doesn't confer immunity to a corrosive substance such as hydrochloric acid, just to bona fide biological or chemical poisons. If there is a question, the GM's decision (as always) rules.

### **INCREASED DENSITY**

**5 POINTS/100 LB. INCREASE**

Your body is made of much denser stuff than a normal man's. For every 100-lb. increase, you get an extra DR 1 against crushing damage (see p. 38), and any knockback done to you is decreased by 1 hex. The extra weight will count as encumbrance if you aren't strong enough to carry it, though! Any body weight over 15xST counts as encumbrance.

The first doubling of weight reduces Swimming skill by 5; after a second doubling, you cannot swim at all, but can walk along the bottom of a body of water.

**Example:** Dwarfstar buys 600 lbs. of Increased Density for 30 points. His normal weight is 130 lbs., so he now weighs 730 lbs. Since this is within the range of his ST 100, he has no extra encumbrance. However, it is more than 4 times his normal weight, so he can't swim! He has a total of 600 lbs. of Increased Density, giving him DR 6 against crushing damage, enough to stop almost all small-arms fire! He's also tough to move; any knockback has 6 hexes subtracted because of his weight.

### **INCREASED SPEED**

**25 POINTS/LEVEL**

You can really move! Your basic Speed increases by 1 for each level, which also raises your Move, Dodge, your place in the combat sequence, and anything else that is based on Basic Speed.

### **INDEPENDENTLY FOCUSABLE EYES**

**15 POINTS**

You can focus in two separate directions, allowing you to aim two weapons at once, or to take full advantage of extra limbs. If you have more than two eyes, buy this advantage again for each additional eye to be focused independently. Three separately focusable eyes would be 30 points, four would be 45, and so on.

### **INFRAVISION**

**15 POINTS**

Your vision extends into the infrared portion of the spectrum, allowing you to see varying degrees of heat. You can even see in absolute darkness if the temperature is above 70°. No matter what the temperature, you suffer only a -1 penalty when fighting at night due to the heat emissions from your opponent (if your foe emits no heat, standard penalties apply). You are +2 to see any living beings during daylight if you are scanning an area visually.

This advantage will also allow you to follow a heat trail when tracking. Add +3 to any tracking rolls if the trail is no more than an hour old. A sudden flash of heat, such as a Fireball, acts as a Flash (see p. 60) to anyone with Infravision.

## INSUBSTANTIALITY

80 POINTS

Your body is insubstantial; perhaps it phases into a different dimension or another vibratory plane. You can move at your normal rate, but you pass through physical objects as if they weren't there. You cannot pick up normal objects or affect them in any way, though your costume becomes insubstantial with you if you have the Costume advantage. The GM may rule that certain types of energy barriers impede your progress, however. Physical and energy attacks can't harm you, but you're still vulnerable to psionic and magical attacks.

Your physical and energy attacks will only affect other insubstantial beings. Your psi and magic skills function normally.

Although you can pass through solids, you still must breathe. When you move through a solid object, treat this as if you were swimming underwater for purposes of suffocation. Your appearance is set as a special effect; you may appear transparent, misty, or completely normal. You can't be invisible without taking the Invisibility advantage (see below).

You are unaffected by gravity while insubstantial, and can move up or down through the air at your normal Move. Treat as the Walk on Air advantage, with no risk of falling.

**Special Enhancement:** Objects may be carried. They take on the changed form when they are picked up, and regain normal form when put down. This also applies to your clothes. Inanimate objects that you make insubstantial cannot be materialized inside of anything. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

**Special Enhancement:** You may turn part of your body substantial while other parts remain insubstantial, or vice versa. Thus, you could reach through a wall and tap someone on the shoulder. +20%, or +100% if you can turn an item you are carrying substantial without dropping it. This requires turning your hand substantial, too.

**Special Limitation:** You are *always* insubstantial – you have no physical body, or perhaps are permanently trapped on the astral plane. Whatever the reason, this is a -50% limitation.



## INVISIBILITY

40 POINTS

You are invisible to normal sight, Infravision, and anything that uses the electromagnetic spectrum. Unlike most advantages, the "default" condition is that you are permanently invisible.

Anything you are carrying remains visible, except your costume if you have the Costume advantage. You still make noise, leave footprints, and can be smelled, though. If you are carrying nothing, you get +9 to Stealth in any situation where being seen would matter. You cannot be photographed, but you can be detected by mechanical devices (but see Invisibility to Machines, below). You don't show up in mirrors.

**Special Enhancement:** You are also invisible to other types of vision – sonar, magnetic fields, and anything else the GM comes up with. +20% per added type.

**Special Enhancement:** You become visible at will. +10%.

**Special Enhancement:** Objects may be carried. They become invisible when they are picked up, and regain

visibility when put down. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

**Special Limitation:** You can be seen in mirrors! -10%.

**Special Limitation:** You cast a shadow. -10%

## INVISIBILITY TO MACHINES

20 POINTS

Machines don't see you – you cannot be photographed, and you don't show up on cameras or other detectors. In some parts of the world, you might be mistaken for a vampire! Alarms such as pressure plates will still notice you, but you can walk past a robot sentry with impunity. Electronically targeted weapons don't get bonuses to hit you. This is always on unless you pay an extra 10%.

**Special Enhancement:** Objects may be carried. They become invisible to machines when picked up, and regain visibility when put down. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

**Special Enhancement:** You can become visible to machines at will. +10%.

## INVULNERABILITY

VARIABLE

Your body is *completely* resistant to damage from some attack forms. Knockback would still be caused from physical attacks, however. Cost of Invulnerability varies according to how common the attack form is, as follows:

Any Kinetic Damage: 300 points.

Common: 150 points.

Occasional: 100 points.

Rare: 75 points.

Very Rare: 50 points.

### EXAMPLES:

Common: Crushing (most bullets, fists, maces, falling safes), Cutting/Impaling (knives, swords, arrows, spears), generic Energy, generic Psionic, generic Living Things, Metal.

Occasional: Air, Cold/Ice, Fire/Heat, Light, Earth, Electricity, Matter Control, Sonic, Bullets Only, Magic, Plants.

Rare: Alteration, Darkness, Vibration, Weather, Radiation, Acid, Poison.

Very Rare: Mud, Citrus Fruit, Insects, Cheese.

Depending on the character conception, an attack against an Invulnerable subject might bounce away, dissipate harmlessly, or pass right through. See sidebar, p. 84, to parry bullets.

**Special Enhancement:** The attack does not cause knockback. +20%.

## MAGNETIC SENSE

5 POINTS/LEVEL

You are able to sense magnetic fields around you. The first level of this power gives you a range of 1 hex; each additional level *doubles* your range. You can determine polarity, strength, and field contour. If no magnetic object more powerful than a kitchen magnet is within one hex of you, you can automatically determine magnetic north. If at least 10 levels of the Microscopic Vision advantage (below) are linked (see p. 33) to this advantage, you are able to directly read computer disks and other magnetic media, although you must possess a Hard Language skill for the particular format you are attempting to read (e.g., Language (DOS floppy), Language (Amiga floppy), etc.)

## MATTER SURFING

30 POINTS

This is a special variation of Flight, and follows Flight rules except where specified otherwise. You can create a 1-hex-wide, 2" thick sheet of ice, earth, fire, baby turtles . . .

or whatever . . . that moves you along. The material is created slightly in front of your feet as you move, and vanishes behind you, leaving no permanent effect unless you buy it as an enhancement. You cannot travel more than 5 feet above the ground. You will *not* fall off unless knocked unconscious.

The Duration of the material left behind is 10 turns unless enhanced. You may use Surfboard or Skateboard skill (both P/A) instead of Flight, but you must buy these skills at regular cost, not "hobby skill" cost.

**Special Limitation:** The track you leave does not vanish immediately, but can be removed by normal means: ice melts, sand must be swept away, and so on. Fire lasts 10 minutes unless smothered (but doesn't ignite other things or cause damage, unless this is bought separately). Usually this is a nuisance. -10%.

**Special Enhancement:** The track you leave does 1 die damage every other turn, until it vanishes or is removed, of a type appropriate to its nature: fire burns, turtles bite, and so on. Won't affect a person unless you Slam him and run over him. Never affects you. +40%.

**Special Enhancement:** You can fly at any height. +33%. If the "surfboard" will land you automatically from any height if you are unconscious, +50%.

### **MICROSCOPIC VISION** **4 POINTS/LEVEL**

Your eyes can magnify tiny details that might otherwise only be revealed by a magnifying glass or microscope. Each level doubles your magnification factor.

With 10 levels of this advantage you can read an optical disk directly, but you must also know a Hard Language skill for each format you attempt to read (as above).

**Example:** 4 points = 2x, 8 points = 4x, 24 points = 64x, and so on.

### **MOVE THROUGH ICE** **10 POINTS**

Ice and snow present no obstacle to you! You can walk through the thickest iceberg and the deepest snow drift as if they didn't exist. No passage is opened behind you; observers just see you melt into the ice and disappear. You will need Penetrating Vision (see p. 44) to see where you're going for any extended trips, though, and you will need an oxygen supply if you plan on staying inside an iceberg for more than a few minutes.

**Special Enhancement:** You may leave a tunnel behind you if you choose. +40%.

### **MULTIPLE FORMS** **5 POINTS PER FORM + SPECIAL LIMITATIONS**

Some of the most interesting character conceptions from comics involve metahumans who have more than one form, each with a different set of super-powers. Designing such a hero is somewhat tricky, but can result in a very satisfying character. There is a 5-point cost *per additional form*. This cost must be paid by the form with the highest point total.

The points must be fairly evenly spread out over the individual characters – no more than a 20% difference from the average.

**Example:** If a normal starting character for the campaign has 500 points, a PC with five forms could have, on the average, 100 points per form (500/5). This could vary by 20% (giving a range of 80-120 points) as long as the *total* adds up to 500. So the player could choose one form with 85 points, one with 115 points, two with 90 points, and one with 120 points.

Each form can have separate advantages, disadvantages (up to 100 points), and quirks in addition to unique

super-powers. No one of the forms will match a 500-point character, but *all* of them together can have a wider range of powers than 500 points could normally buy. When *disadvantages* are considered, a 500-point super has 600 points to use. Five 100-point supers, each with 100 points in disadvantages (which may be the same, or different) can split 1,000 points worth of abilities among themselves.

In some cases, one form will not be aware that the other forms exist! A character with Multiple Forms is a perfect candidate for the Split Personality disadvantage (see p. B37). This Split Personality disadvantage is bought by *each* form. Also, a character with both Duplication (p. 39) and Multiple Forms could be two different supers at the same time! (Unlike Split Personality, Duplication only has to be bought by *one* of the forms.)

**Special Limitations:** Depending on how fast a PC can switch between forms, special limitations apply. If it takes less than 1 minute to switch, there is no point break. If it takes 1d minutes to switch, this is a -20% limitation; 1d hours brings a -40% limitation. If the GM prefers not to have variable switching times, anything from 1 minute to 59 minutes is worth -20%; 1 hour or more is worth -40%. The limitation only applies to super-powers, not to normal advantages!

**GM Note:** A character who changes physical appearance as a special effect of using a super-power does *not* have to buy multiple forms – he simply changes his looks.

See also *Transformation*, p. 47.

**Shared Points:** The above example assumes that you wish to have several separate, unique forms. What if all your forms share some of the same base skills, attributes, etc., and just have a few different super-abilities? This limits the variety of abilities the character can have, so it allows a point break.

You may declare a certain number of points to be "shared." For example, *all* your forms have IQ 12 (20 points), DX 14 (45 points), and 8 points in the Lockpicking skill (total 73 points). In a 500-point campaign, this leaves you with 427 points. These 427 could then be divided among your Multiple Forms – but *all* of the forms would start with IQ 12, DX 14, and 8 points in Lockpicking before any of the 427 points were spent. This is cheaper than buying those abilities separately for each form.

You may declare a maximum of 20% of your available point total as shared points (e.g., in a 500-point campaign a maximum of 100 points can be shared). Only attributes and "normal" advantages and skills can be shared. Nothing that requires a super Unusual Background can be shared.

### **NICTATING MEMBRANE** **10 POINTS/LEVEL**

Your eyeballs are covered by transparent lenses. This allows you to see normally under water, and will help protect your eyes from sand, Mace, and so on. Any time you are hit in the eyes with a gaseous or liquid attack the lens provides your eyes, only, PD 2, DR 1 per level (maximum PD 6). The lens also adds +3 per level to all HT rolls concerned with eye damage, and can be opened and closed just like an eyelid.

### **PARABOLIC HEARING** **4 POINTS/LEVEL**

This is the auditory equivalent of Telescopic Vision. You can "zoom in" on a particular sound or area, and you have a filter to sort out background noise from the desired sounds.

The table below shows how far away a normal human listener must be from various sounds for them to have the same volume as normal conversation at 1 hex (3 feet). Each level of Parabolic Hearing doubles the distance at which you can clearly hear any given sound.

Decibels	Example	Range (yards)
10	Leaves rustling	1/4
20	Quiet conversation	1/2
30	Normal conversation	1
40	Light traffic	2
50	Loud conversation	4
60	Noisy office	8
70	Normal traffic	16
80	"Quiet" rock band	32
90	Thunder; heavy traffic	64
100	Jet takeoff	128
110	Very loud rock band	256
120	Metallica	512

*Example:* A super with 2 levels of Parabolic Hearing could hear normal conversation at 4 hexes, or leaves rustling at 1 hex.

### PASSIVE DEFENSE 25 POINTS/LEVEL UP TO 6

For whatever reason, it is much harder for attacks to hit you. This might be related to your speed, a "sixth sense" that warns you about upcoming attacks, or good old-fashioned armor. Each level adds 1 to your PD, up to PD 6. Your own PD does not add to the PD of any armor you wear; take the PD of the outer layer. If you have the Costume advantage, your costume shares your PD.

### PENETRATING VISION 10 POINTS/LEVEL

Penetrating Vision (also known as X-Ray Vision) allows you to see through solid objects. One level of this advantage allows you to see through up to 6 inches of normal matter. Each additional level adds six more inches to the thickness through which you can peer. You can just barely see an outline of the substance you are looking through – not enough to impair vision in any way.

Penetrating Vision works in conjunction with other normal and super visual abilities without the need of a Link.

*Special Limitation:* Some substance completely blocks the power. -30% for common substances such as wood, rock, or plastic. -20% for less common ones such as brick or asphalt. -10% for specific materials such as lead.

*Special Limitation:* The ability only works through one particular substance. -40% for common materials such as wood, metal, brick, etc. -60% for uncommon materials such as ice, adobe, etc. -80% for absurd materials such as chocolate, silk, etc.

### PERFECT BALANCE 15 POINTS

You have no problem keeping your footing, no matter how narrow the walking surface, under normal conditions. You can walk on tighropes, ledges, tree limbs, or anything else without having to make a DX roll. If the surface is wet, slippery, or otherwise unstable, you get +6 on all rolls to keep your feet. In combat you receive a +4 to your DX on any rolls to keep your feet or avoid being knocked down. This advantage adds +1 to Acrobatics, Flight, and Piloting skills.

### POLARIZED EYES 5 POINTS

Your eyes adjust instantaneously to changing light conditions. If you have Dark or Night Vision, you can instantly adjust from bright light to darkness. If you are caught in a bright flash of light, your eyes will automatically adjust so that the maximum time you are blinded or stunned from the flash is 2 turns.

### PRESSURE SUPPORT 15 POINTS

You can survive the crushing pressure of the ocean depths or the surface of Jupiter. This advantage doesn't confer

any immunity or resistance to any attack form except for those that directly manipulate the barometric pressure.

### RADAR SENSE 50 POINTS PLUS 1 POINT/ADDITIONAL HEX RADIUS

You have a complete radar "picture" of everything going on around you. You can sense shapes and objects, but not colors. Make a Vision roll to make out details about an object.

*Special Enhancement:* You can "see" inside any object within your radius. +40%.

*Special Enhancement:* You can see colors. +20%.

### RADIO HEARING 10 POINTS

This ability allows you to listen in on radio traffic of all kinds – AM, FM, police band, shortwave, CB, marine band, and many others. Make an IQ roll to "tune" to a particular frequency (one try per turn).

### RECOVERY 10 POINTS

You recover from unconsciousness very quickly. Instead of staying unconscious for *hours*, your recovery time is measured in *minutes* (see p. B129). In any situation where unconsciousness was measured in minutes, you reduce it to *seconds*.

### REDUCED SLEEP 10 POINTS

Your body operates efficiently without much sleep. All fatigue losses from missed sleep (see sidebar, p. B134) accumulate weekly rather than daily – so one week without sleep costs you 5 fatigue rather than 35.

### REFLECTION VARIABLE

Not only is your body immune to certain types of damage, but some of any such attack will actually "bounce back" at the attacker! Every level of Reflection bounces 1d of appropriate damage (+4 damage equals 1d, +7 damage equals 2d) back to hit the attacker. The first time an attack is reflected, the attacker doesn't get an active defense against the reflected attack, but may roll versus PD. On subsequent reflected attacks, he gets a normal active defense. See the *Defense Table* on p. 35 for the costs of Reflection against various types of attack.

*Example:* Icepick attacks you with a 7d+7 ice attack. You have 3d of Reflection vs. Cold Power. You take 4d+7 damage, less whatever other defenses you have. Icepick would take 3d damage, less whatever other defenses she has.

### REGENERATION 10/25/50/100 POINTS

You recover from damage much faster than normal people. This does *not* allow you to regrow lost limbs (but see Regrowth, below). You automatically have the Rapid Healing advantage (p. B22) at no extra cost. If bought for a gadget, either the gadget is self-repairing, or it heals the user. To do both, it must be bought twice. Cost of this advantage depends on the speed of the regeneration:

*Slow Regeneration:* You recover 1 HT (or Hit Point) every 12 hours, in addition to normal healing. 10 points.

*Regular Regeneration:* You recover 1 HT (or Hit Point) per hour. 25 points.

*Fast Regeneration:* You recover from injury almost immediately, regaining 1 HT per minute. 50 points.

*Instant Regeneration:* You heal almost as quickly as you are damaged, at the rate of 1 HT per turn. 100 points.

## REGROWTH

You can regrow lost limbs! A lost ear, finger, or toe will regrow in 1d weeks, a lost hand or foot in 1d+1 months, and a lost eye, arm, or leg in 2d+2 months.

## RESURRECTION

You can die, but you get better. Any time you succumb to wounds, poison, or any other means of death other than old age (which is permanent), you will come back to life. Starting one hour after your death, you will begin regaining HT at your usual rate – normally 1/day, although Regeneration (above) speeds this up. Even if you have been hacked to pieces, those pieces will slither together and rejoin. If any parts were destroyed, they will regrow spontaneously (heads and brains come back with full memories and personality). You will remain unconscious until you regain your full HT. Players should feel free to alter the special effects of this advantage (e.g., instead of slithering back together, your body parts teleport to each other, or are recreated by cloning) as long as the basic time doesn't change.

If parts of you are kept separate, they do *not* grow multiple copies! Instead, the largest existing pieces becomes you, while the rest melt into goo.

If your entire body is destroyed (disintegrated, engulfed in a nova, etc.), *triple* the time required to heal, as widely-scattered atoms drift together.

Each time you die, you lose 25 points! You may take these off of anything you wish. If your point total is brought down to 0, you die permanently!

**Special Limitation:** One class of damage – poison, wood, metal, etc. – prevents resurrection for as long as the damaging substance remains in the body. -10% for rare or very rare materials (uranium, diamond), -30% for occasional or common substances (wood, metal) or substances that are difficult to remove (poison, radiation).

**Special Limitation:** One class of damage – acid, fire, etc. – causes damage which cannot be completely healed by Resurrection, and which must be healed by medical, magical, or psionic efforts. A person with this limitation comes back from the dead in a coma with his HT equal to what it was when he died (or -HTx5, whichever is greater). -10% for a rare or very rare attack form, -20% for occasional forms, -30% for common forms.

**Special Limitation:** If you are killed by a blow from a substance you have a Vulnerability to, you die permanently! This is worth -5% on a rare or very rare form, -15% for occasional, and -25% for common.

**Special Limitation:** Reincarnation. You are reborn into a new body with new abilities and super skills – but you always retain the Resurrection advantage. Your attributes may also change. (The GM creates the new form, or may allow the player to do so.) -20%.

## SEE INVISIBLE

You can see objects or people that are normally invisible. This advantage is particularly useful for building security gadgets that can spot infiltrators with the Invisibility to Machines advantage (see p. 42).

Buy this advantage separately for each kind of invisibility.

## SENSITIVE TOUCH

You can sense things with your fingertips that others aren't sensitive enough to notice – residual heat in a chair, faint vibrations on the floor as someone approaches, similarities or differences in two pieces of fabric, and any other situation that the GM rules applicable. Roll your IQ to use this talent successfully.

## 40 POINTS

## SHADOW FORM

You can become a two-dimensional shadow. You slip along walls or floors at your normal Move; you cannot walk through three-dimensional space, but must slide along an object. You can slide through the smallest crack (as long as it is long enough for you to fit your shoulders through). You can defy gravity, creeping up walls and onto ceilings at half your normal Move. You may not carry normal items, or affect them in any way except by affecting their appearance as your shadowy body falls on them.

Physical attacks do half damage to you in this form; energy attacks do normal damage, except for light-based attacks, which do 50% extra damage. Mental attacks will do normal damage. You can use any of your super-abilities in this form, but cannot perform any purely physical attacks or actions.

**Special Enhancement:** Objects may be carried. They take shadow form when picked up, and return to normal when put down. You still may not affect non-shadow objects. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

**Special Limitation:** You cannot switch out of shadow form, making it very hard for you to interact with others. This is not a percentage limitation; treat an unswitchable Shadow Form as a *disadvantage* worth -20 points. If objects may be carried, use the percentage value of the enhancements to lower the cost of the disadvantage, as described for Body of Air.

## SHRINKING

You can decrease your size at will. Your minimum size depends on how many levels of Shrinking you purchase. Figure your size as normal, then each level of Shrinking *halves* it. E.g.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal at level 1,  $\frac{1}{4}$  normal at level 2,  $\frac{1}{8}$  normal at level 3,  $\frac{1}{16}$  normal at level 4,  $\frac{1}{32}$  at level 5, etc. Thus, it would take an average (5' 10") man 6 levels of Shrinking ( $\frac{1}{64}$ ) to reduce his size to 1".

When you shrink, you cannot carry *any* equipment, and all your clothes fall off (unless you've purchased the Costume advantage, p. 38). If you wish to carry equipment while shrunk, it is a special enhancement (see below).

Movement is reduced proportionately; shrunken weapons, punches, and super-powered attacks do proportionately less damage; magical or psi attacks from a shrunken character are resisted at +1 per level of Shrinking that the character is using. DR and hit points (not HT!) are reduced proportionately as well.

**Example:** Aristonious, the Minuscule Mage, has shrunk to a mere  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (7 levels of Shrinking). He casts a Sleep spell on a guard. The guard resists at +7.

The cost of Shrinking depends on the number of levels bought.

Level	Cost	Permanent (Disadvantage)
1	20	-15
2	40	-20
3	60	-30
4	80	-40
5	100	-60
6	200	-80
7+	100 per level	-100 (doesn't increase)

**Special Enhancement:** The Affects Others enhancement is worth +50% *per person* that can be affected. For example, a PC who bought this enhancement once could only shrink one companion. To shrink a different friend, the original one must return to normal size.

## 50 POINTS

## VARIABLE

**Special Enhancement:** Objects may be carried. They reduce size when they are picked up, and regain normal size when put down. +10% for No Encumbrance, +20% for Light, +50% for Medium, or +100% for Heavy.

**Special Enhancement:** Retain normal hit points. +30%.

**Special Enhancement:** Damage done remains normal. +100%. The GM may wish to ban this – it makes for an almost uncatchable assassin.

**Special Limitation:** If you are *permanently* shrunk, this is a disadvantage! See the table, above. If you are permanently shrunk with an enhancement, treat the multiplier as negative.

**Example:** You are permanently shrunk to Level 4 –  $\frac{1}{16}$  normal size. Normally, this is a -40 point disadvantage. You have the enhancement “retain normal hit points.” This is a +30% enhancement. It does not increase the cost to -52 points; it reduces it by 30%, to -28 points.

## SILENCE

5 POINTS/LEVEL

You can move and breathe noiselessly, giving you an additional +2 per level to your Stealth skill if you are perfectly motionless, or a +1 if you are moving (even in armor, etc.). These bonuses help you only in the dark, or against someone who is listening rather than depending on sight!

## SONAR VISION

0/25 POINTS

You can “see” by emitting sound waves which bounce off the surroundings. No light is required. Sonar can only be “jammed” or fooled by *very* loud noise (e.g., the Thunderclap spell). Note that Sonar Vision will not function if the individual is somehow deafened. Sonar Vision cannot perceive colors, but can “see” the *interiors* of living things and other objects of equivalent density. Effective range is typically a few hundred yards.

Unlike the more effective Radar Sense (above), perception is limited to a 120° arc in front of the individual. As well, Sonar Vision can be fooled by someone moving *very* slowly if they can win a Quick Contest of their Stealth-4 roll vs. the individual’s Hearing.

If this is your only form of vision, this is worth no points. As an adjunct to another form of vision, it is worth 25 points.

## SPEAK WITH ANIMALS

15 POINTS

This allows you to carry on a conversation with any land animal (including birds, reptiles, and insects). How much information you can gain from an animal depends on its IQ and reaction roll (if needed), and the GM. Add +2 to the reaction roll if you’re offering food while you’re talking. In general, insects and other small creatures won’t be able to do much more than convey emotions such as hunger and fear, while animals like chimpanzees or cats could have a reasonably intelligent discussion. It takes one minute to ask one question and get the answer – assuming the animal decides to speak to you. The GM may require a reaction roll!

**Special Limitation:** Only one kind of animal. -20% for one type (e.g., only mammals, or only birds), -30% for one family (e.g., the feline family), -50% for one species (e.g., house cats only).

## SPEAK WITH FISH

10 POINTS

Works just like Speak with Animals, but only on aquatic creatures. This includes whales, dolphins, squid, frogs, lobsters, and other creatures that live in the water.

## SPEAK WITH PLANTS

15 POINTS

This will allow you to get the most basic emotions from a plant. Large trees may have higher intelligence than the average ivy, at the GM’s whim. A plant might know how recently it was watered, or walked on, or something else that has direct relationship to its well-being, but would be unable to relate an overheard phone conversation. Normal plants will always cooperate, within the limits of their ability. A mutant cabbage from Mars might require a reaction roll.

## SPEAK UNDERWATER

8 POINTS

You have the ability to make yourself understood, and to understand others, while underwater. You may talk normally while submerged, and you can understand what others say.

**Special Enhancement:** You may talk to those outside of the water while submerged, and can understand people on the surface talking to you. +50%.

## SPECTRUM VISION

40 POINTS

You can “tune” your vision to any portion of the spectrum you desire. This allows you to check an area for radio emissions, gamma rays, UV radiation, or anything else you desire. Note that just because you can see radio waves or microwave transmissions doesn’t mean you can understand them! You just know they’re there. The GM may require use of a specific scientific skill to interpret the data.

## STRETCHING

30 POINTS  
PLUS 15 PER ADDED LEVEL

Each level of stretching allows you to stretch a limb (or your entire body) up to twice its normal size. The human body normally covers 1 hex, so 3 levels of stretching would allow it to flatten out to cover  $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$  hexes, or to stretch an arm up to 8 hexes away. Your entire body or limb can be targeted from any hex adjacent to its stretching path.

The maximum speed at which you can stretch is your Move (e.g., even if you can stretch 30 hexes, if your Move is 7, the maximum distance you can stretch in one turn is 7 hexes).

This also includes the advantage of Flexibility (p. 40).

**Special Limitation:** You can stretch without flexibility, like a robot with an extending arm. -50%.

## SUPER CLIMBING

3 POINTS/LEVEL

Each level of Super Climbing adds 1 to a character’s Move when climbing. This can be combined with the Clinging advantage (p. 38).

## SUPER FLIGHT

20 POINTS/LEVEL

Each level of Super Flight doubles your speed when you are flying, just as Super Running increases running speed. See p. B139 for the effects of flight in combat. Flight is a prerequisite for this advantage.

## SUPER JUMP

10 POINTS/LEVEL

Each level of Super Jump doubles the distance you can leap. Additionally, if you fall a distance less than or equal to your maximum high jump (p. B88), you take no damage. This can be increased by 5 yards with a successful Acrobatics roll (p. B131).



Your Move during a super jump is equal to your Move or 20% of your maximum normal long-jump, whichever is greater. Thus, your maximum normal jump never takes over 5 turns. If your maximum jump is 100 yards, your Move is 20 in any jump.

You can jump at a foe in order to slam him, figure the slam at your maximum jump speed! You don't need to make a separate roll to jump accurately. (Note that if you used Bouncing to bounce into someone on the bounce, you *do* have to roll.)

### **SUPER RUNNING**

**20 POINTS/LEVEL**

Each level of Super Running doubles your Move when you are running in a relatively straight line. Your combat Move and Dodge are unaffected, but anyone targeting you with a missile or thrown weapon will subtract a speed modifier from his skill roll if you are running! Figure turning radius as for Flight (see sidebar, p. 24). In many cases it will be best to stop running for a turn, change directions, and start running again!

*Example:* A character with a Move of 8 buys 4 levels of Super Running, which costs 80 points. He can now run at  $8 \times (2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2) = 128$  yards per second (262 mph!).

### **SUPER SWIMMING**

**10 POINTS/LEVEL**

**PREREQUISITE: AMPHIBIOUS (P. 36)**

Every level of Super Swimming doubles your swimming speed, just as Super Flight increases your flying speed.

### **TELESCOPIC VISION**

**6 POINTS/LEVEL**

You can "zoom in" with your eyes, allowing you to outperform even the best binoculars! Power is figured as for Microscopic Vision. The horizon is normally (on flat ground) three miles away – beyond that, the curvature of the Earth will block your sight.

### **TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE**

**10 POINTS/LEVEL**

You can function normally at a wider range of temperatures than normals can. For game purposes, a temperature "comfort zone" of about 55° is considered normal. Each level of this advantage allows you to add HT  $\times 10^\circ$  to the size of your comfort zone. The GM determines exactly where this comfort zone is centered for each individual. You never suffers any ill effects (such as the loss of Fatigue or HT) from temperatures which fall within your comfort zone.

This advantage confers no special resistance to attacks by fire or ice unless the only damage is a result of a rise or fall in the ambient temperature. In particular, this will not help an individual if his *body temperature* is being manipulated.

If the GM wishes, partial levels of Temperature Tolerance can be used to "fine tune" an individual's comfort zone. These would cost proportionately less (e.g., 5 points to add HT  $\times 5^\circ$ , 15 points for HT  $\times 15^\circ$ ).

### **TRANSFORMATION VARIABLE**

You must change from your normal human form to a "super" form before you can use any of your super-powers. This is a special case of the Multiple Forms rule (p. 43).

Your mundane form can be built on a maximum of 100 points (or whatever is normal for your campaign). But, unlike regular Multiple Forms, all the advantages, skills, etc. that you know in your mundane form are available in your transformed state as well. As the game progresses, earned character points can be spent to improve either your mundane form or your metaform.

There are four types of Transformation, each with its own point cost.

a) You can switch instantly from either form to the other (by saying a magic word, hitting your crutch on the ground, tapping your heels together, etc.). This is a 15-point advantage, useful primarily because it allows a fantastically quick change of identity. If you have the Costume advantage (p. 38), you switch instantly into your costume.

b) You can switch instantly from either form to the other, but can only change to metaform a limited number of times per day. This costs a base 15 points for the instant transformation, but you may apply the Limited Use limitation (p. 53) to this point cost.

c) The transformation is not instant. Simply apply the Takes Extra Time (p. 54) limitation to the 15-point cost for instant transformation.

d) The transformation is not instant, and you have a limited number of transformations per day. Apply both Takes Extra Time and Limited Use limitations to the 15-point instant transformation cost.

### **TUNNEL**

**40 POINTS**

**+ 10 POINTS/HEX OF TUNNELING SPEED**

You can dig through the Earth like a giant worm, spewing dirt and stone behind you. This skill lets you dig a man-sized passageway through earth or stone. Movement through rock or stone is at half your normal tunneling speed.

The GM may wish to assess a chance that the tunnel collapses behind you. Roll each minute vs. Engineering (Mining), Prospecting-3, or IQ-4 to dig a stable tunnel. This can be modified up for hard rock and down for soft rock and dirt. Each halving of your tunneling speed gives you a +1 on this roll.

### **ULTRAHEARING**

**5 POINTS**

You can hear sounds in the frequencies above the normal range of human hearing (20,000 cycles). Dog whistles, motion detectors, and even many household appliances may emit sounds audible to you.

### **UNAGING**

**15 POINTS**

You will never grow old. Your age is fixed at any point you choose and will never change. You do not have to make any aging rolls. A character with this advantage cannot get any points by taking the Age disadvantage!

*Special Enhancement:* You can "age" in either direction at will, at up to 10 times normal rate. +20%.

### **VACUUM SUPPORT 40 POINTS**

You can survive in the hostile environment of space. This advantage maintains your internal pressure and temperature and allows you to "breathe vacuum." It does not protect you from attacks or damage of any kind unless the attack makes use of a vacuum. This also allows you to survive underwater, or anyplace else that there is no air to breathe. This includes the Doesn't Breathe (p. 39) and Pressure Support (p. 44) advantages.

### **WALK ON AIR 20 POINTS**

Air, smoke, and other gases are like solid ground beneath your feet, allowing you to walk up and down "invisible stairs" at your normal movement rate. This won't work in a vacuum – there has to be *some* kind of air present. If you get knocked down or slip, you will fall! You may attempt one DX roll per turn of falling; if you make any successful roll, you will stop

in thin air, unharmed, but if you hit the ground, you will take full damage from the fall (see p. B130). There are no special encumbrance limitations on carried equipment.

### WALK ON LIQUID

15 POINTS

You can walk on the surface of any liquid as if it were solid ground. This doesn't protect you from any damage that you would normally take from coming in contact with the stuff, though (so you can't walk across volcanic lava or boiling acid without taking damage). Your Move is normal, and there are no extra limitations on encumbrance.

## SUPER DISADVANTAGES

### ACCELERATED AGING

-10 /LEVEL

Your lifespan is *significantly* shorter than average. Each level decreases the character's current lifespan by 1/4, round down, and multiple levels are applied successively, rounding down at each stage. This affects the age at which you reach maturity, the age at which aging rolls begin, the ages at which aging rolls increase in frequency, and the interval between aging rolls. The following table summarizes the effects of the first 7 levels:

Level	Maturity	Age (Frequency of Aging Rolls)			
1	13 y	37 y (9 m)	52 y (4 m)	67 y (2 m)	
2	9 y	27 y (6 m)	39 y (3 m)	50 y (1 m)	
3	6 y	20 y (4 m)	29 y (2 m)	37 y (22 d)	
4	4 y	15 y (3 m)	21 y (1 m)	27 y (16 d)	
5	3 y	11 y (2 m)	15 y (22 d)	20 y (12 d)	
6	2 y	8 y (1 m)	11 y (16 d)	15 y (9 d)	
7	1 y	6 y (22 d)	8 y (12 d)	11 y (6 d)	

### ALTERED TIME RATE

SEE P. 35

### DEPENDENCY

VARIABLE

This may be thought of as a super-Addiction. Your body requires some special substance. Without it, you weaken and die! The value of a dependency depends on how common the item is.

Rare (cannot be bought; must be found or made): 30 points

Infrequent (can be bought, but expensive!): 20 points

Occasional (can be bought): 10 points

Common (available almost anywhere): 5 points

Illegal: adds 5 points to any of the above

This value is modified by the frequency with which you must eat/drink/breathe/use up the item:

**Constantly:** Five times listed value. The race must carry and use the substance at all times - for example, an exotic atmosphere. Lose 1 HT per minute without the item.

**Hourly:** Four times listed value. Lose 1 HT per ten minutes after you miss an hourly dose.

**Daily:** Three times listed value. Lose 1 HT per hour after you miss a daily dose.

**Weekly:** Twice listed value. Lose 1 HT per six hours after you miss a weekly dose.

**Monthly:** Listed value. Lose 1 HT per six hours after you miss a monthly dose.

If lack of the item merely causes you to lose your powers as soon as you miss a dose, regaining those powers when you get the substance again, cut the value of the disadvantage by half.

### UNCONTROLLED CHANGE

VARIABLE

You have another form, built on its own character sheet as for Transformation (see p. 47). However, you have no control over your change to this form! You are usually in your "normal" form. Stress (physical danger, a failed Fright Check, etc.) will cause you to change to the metahuman form. You cannot change back until, in the GM's opinion, the stress has been removed.

Value of this disadvantage depends on the general reaction modifier of the form you change into. It is -10 points, *plus* -10 points for each -1 of general reaction penalty to the new form. Thus, if your transformed form is normal or good-looking, this is a -10 point disadvantage due to the inconvenience. If the form is horrible enough to earn a -4 reaction, Uncontrolled Change is worth 50 points!

If you are allowed a Will roll to attempt to control the change, halve the value of the disadvantage.

**Special Limitation:** If your normal form is the metahuman one and stress causes you to lose your powers, this disadvantage is worth a flat 50 points regardless of reaction modifiers . . . but the character's survival chances will be low!



### VULNERABILITY

VARIABLE

You take extra damage from certain forms of attack, or are weakened and hurt every time you are merely in the same room as a substance. For each level of Vulnerability you purchase, you take an extra 1d of damage (or multiply the damage times the level of Vulnerability for attacks doing less than 1d damage). This damage is added to the usual damage of the attack, *before* any DR is subtracted.

You *cannot* take a Vulnerability to anything that you have Invulnerability, Absorption, or Reflection against.

The value per level depends on how common the substance or attack form is. See *Defense Costs*, p. 35, for examples of attack forms; the GM decides on the value of substances.

Very Rare: -3 points per level

Rare: -5 points per level

Occasional: -10 points per level

Common: -15 points per level

If you are affected by merely being near the substance, add 10% per hex of range to the cost per level. If damage comes off of fatigue rather than hit points, the value per level is halved. If you are hit with an object you take damage from just by being near, you add the physical damage to the Vulnerability.

**Example 1:** McBeef takes fatigue damage every time he gets within 5 hexes of a chicken (dead or alive). The GM rules that this is an infrequent occurrence (unless he works as a waiter!) so it's worth 5 per level. Since it has a 5-hex range,

that adds 50%. Total cost is 7.5 per level. He wants 2 levels (2d damage), which would be worth 15 points, but only takes fatigue, so the value is halved. Total value: -7 points!

If McBeef was hit with a chicken for 2 points of physical damage, he'd also take 2d of fatigue.

**Example 2:** Glacier has a 3-level vulnerability to fire-based attacks. This is a common attack form, so it's worth 45 points. If someone hit him with a torch for 2 points damage, this is multiplied by his vulnerability level to get 6 – he'd take 6 points damage. If Glacier was hit by a 2d+2 flame jet, the attacker would add 3d damage, and roll 5d+2 for damage.

## WEAKNESS

## VARIABLE

This is like a Vulnerability, but far less severe. A Super Weakness is a sensitivity, not to any kind of attack as such, but to the presence of a common substance or condition. It cannot be a food item or something equally easy to avoid. The more quickly you take damage, the more the Weakness is worth:

1d per minute: -20 points

1d per 5 minutes: -10 points

1d per 30 minutes: -5 points

Halve the value if the damage done is only fatigue or only Stun (see p. 84).

The rarity of the weakening condition also affects the value of the weakness.

Rare (Radiation, acid rain, acid rock): half value.

Occasional (Microwave radiation, temperature below freezing, airborne pollen): listed value.

Common (cigarette smoke, rock music): double value.

Very common (sunlight, living plants, plastic): triple value.

## ENHANCEMENTS

Players can use enhancements and limitations to customize a particular super-power, advantage, or disadvantage to better fit the conception of each character's abilities. Thus, the ability list expands from hundreds of different super-abilities to billions!

Many special enhancements and limitations are listed for particular super-abilities; the ones below are "generic" and can be applied to most powers. The GM may reject any combination that seems silly!

## ACCURACY

+5%

This enhancement may be purchased more than once. Each iteration adds +1 to the Acc for a power when targeting (see pp. 30 and B115).

**Example:** A Fireball normally has a SS of 12 and an Acc of 1. To buy a Fireball at Power 10 (normally 60 points) with an Acc of 6 (5 levels of Accuracy) would cost 75 points.

## AFFECTS INSUBSTANTIAL

+20%

The ability will affect insubstantial beings *in addition* to normal, substantial things.

## AFFECTS OTHERS

+40%

This enhancement is only available for advantages. The normal effect is that the user may now make a normal "ranged attack" (see p. 30) against anyone, to give them the ability to use the enhanced advantage. For instance, if you have Invisibility/Affects Others, you may roll vs. DX as though you were attacking someone with a ranged power. If you succeed, they will not automatically become invisible, but they may

become invisible, staying invisible until your Duration expires – normally 1 second per point of your HT. This may be increased with Extended Duration (p. 50).

If Affects Others is combined with the Area Effect or Wall enhancements (or the Touch Only limitation), it can be used on those in the area, or the person touched, without a roll.

## AFFECTS SUBSTANTIAL

+40%

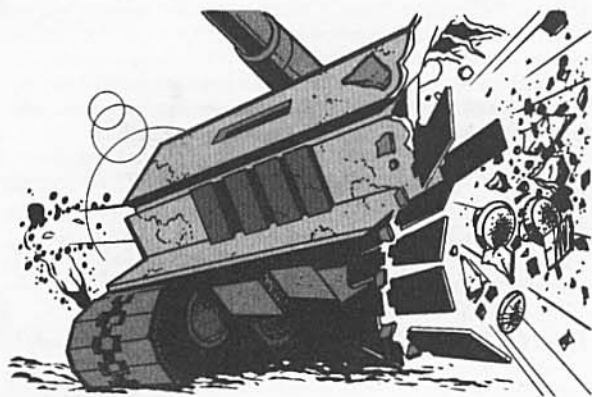
A power enhanced with this will affect substantial objects even if the user is insubstantial. It will also affect insubstantial creatures normally.

This is a very powerful enhancement, as it allows a PC to create a virtually "unkillable" character. The GM should feel free to disallow it, restrict it to NPCs, or to make sure that lots of foes have the Affects Insubstantial enhancement.

## AREA EFFECT

+50%

This allows a ranged power to be used as an area power (see p. 31). The Affects Others enhancement must also be purchased for a super advantage to be used as an area power. If the power is normally resisted, everyone in the area gets a resistance roll versus it.



## ARMOR PIERCING

+50%

Your attacks partially bypass DR. Any armor piercing attack is only affected by  $\frac{3}{4}$  the target's DR (round up). You can buy this enhancement twice, which will lower the target's DR by half. No further reductions are available.

**Example:** Rebel Yell hits a DR 32 foe with an Armor Piercing Sonic Blast doing 30 points of damage. The DR is modified to 24 ( $.75 \times 32$ ), so 6 points get through!

## CONTINUING DAMAGE

+50%/+100%

An attack power with this enhancement continues to do damage to its victim, reduced by 2d each turn until damage drops below 1d, at which point it stops. Each +4 counts as 1d of damage, each +7 counts as 2d.

**Example:** A super hits with a 4d+4 blast of napalm. It would do 4d+4 the first turn, 2d+4 the second, and 1d the third.

For +100%, the attack functions as above until it is reduced below 1d. After this point, it will continue to do 1 point of damage per turn, *ignoring DR*, until the Duration expires –. If the victim takes an action that (in the GM's opinion) nullifies the attack (dives into water if on fire, takes an antivenom if poisoned, etc.), the damage ceases. If an attack has this enhancement at +100%, it is limited to one level of the Extended Duration enhancement.

**CONTINUOUS BEAM****+50%**

This may be bought for any ranged attack power that does direct damage (e.g., Flame Jet, Stone Missile, etc.) and has a RoF of 4 or higher (via the Rapid Fire enhancement, p. 51). This enhancement allows the super to use the *laser autofire* rules (p. B120) when calculating damage; total the damage from all shots that hit *before* subtracting DR.

*Example:* Starwind hits three times with a 5d attack. Instead of three separate 5d attacks, she does 15d damage!

**CUTTING****+25%**

This enhancement can only be applied to ranged attacks doing damage. Any attack with this enhancement does *cutting* damage rather than crushing.

**DELAY****+20%/+40%**

Your attack doesn't hit immediately; it waits. A +20% enhancement results in a flat 2-second pause before the power works; on the second round *after* a successful skill roll is made, the attack actually goes off. Delay at +40% allows the time delay to be selectable from 1 to 10 seconds.

In either case, the attack may be made upon a specific hex (effectively laying a "mine") which requires a *second* skill roll to hit anyone in the hex when it goes off. Or it may be targeted upon an individual, in which case the attack is "sticky" – meaning it stays with the target until it goes off.

Orientation of the attack is constant; if the target turns his back before it goes off, he is attacked from behind!

**DOESN'T HARM USER****+20%**

An attack power with this enhancement will not harm its user if it is reflected or badly ricocheted – it simply dissipates, bounces off, or whatever other special effect is chosen by the player at the time of character creation.

**EXPLOSIVE EFFECT****+40%**

Your attacks explode on impact, doing damage over a circular area. Damage is reduced by 1d (plus or minus any +1, +2, -1, etc.) per hex away from the impact site.

*Example:* You target an exploding stone missile on a hex in the midst of a group. It hits and explodes for 5d+5 damage within the hex it landed in. Everyone one hex away from the center takes 4d+4 damage, all at the 2-hex distance take 3d+3, and so on out to 4 hexes away.

**EXTENDED DURATION****+30%**

A power enhanced in this manner lasts twice the normal Duration. This may be purchased as many times as desired, each enhancement doubling the Duration again. This can't be bought for attack powers.

**FAN****SPECIAL**

This modifies a ranged attack to affect everything within a fan-shaped area of effect. The cost of the enhancement depends on the final width of the fan. For each +10% enhancement, one hex is added to the final width of the cone. The length of the fan is equal to 1/4 maximum range.

*Example:* Rexor has a Flame Jet-12(8) doing 8d damage. Normal Range on this attack is 80 hexes, so his fan would be 20 hexes long. He buys 10 levels of the Fan enhancement, giving him a triangle 20 hexes long and 10 hexes wide at the terminus. See diagram, right.

**HOMING****+50%**

You don't have to roll to hit your target with this power. Your attack automatically hits! The victim still gets an active defense or resistance (if either is applicable). The only limitation is that you must be able to see your target.

If combined with the Rapid Fire enhancement, this must be taken once for *each* additional attack.

The final skill level for a Homing attack must be a *minimum* of 14!

*Example:* Flamin' Jane's Fireball has Rapid Fire × 2 (+80%). If she wanted all three of her missiles to be Homing, she'd have to take Homing three times (+150%) – making this an expensive bonus!

**HOTSHOT****+30%**

Attack powers with this modifier can be "hotshot" in the same manner as a laser – extra effort allows higher than normal damage. Damage may be increased by 1d by spending 2 points of fatigue.

*Example:* Argyl has a hotshot Flame Jet at Power 7 (7d damage). If he needs more damage, he can fire a 10d jet, but it costs him 6 points of fatigue.

**IMPALING****+40%**

This enhancement can only be applied to ranged attacks doing damage. Any attack with this enhancement does *impaling* damage rather than crushing.

**INCREASED AREA****+20%**

Each level of Increased Area adds 1 to the radius of an area power.

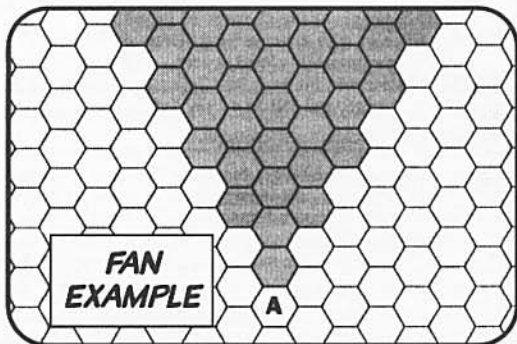
**INCREASED KNOCKBACK****+20%**

Normally, 8 points of damage does 1 hex of knockback. Each purchase of this enhancement reduces that number by 1.

*Example:* The Fireball power is enhanced three times by Increased Knockback (+60%). It now does 1 hex of knockback for each 5 points of damage.

**INSTANTANEOUS** **+20%**

This ability does not require a turn of concentration. You are still limited to one power use per turn, but you may now use a power in a turn that you take a full normal move or hand-to-hand attack. This can also be bought for an advantage to allow it to be turned on instantly.



**LINK****+10%/+20%**

This enhancement is bought when you are linking a power to another power. See p. 33.

**MOVABLE AREA****+40%**

Any area power with this enhancement can be "attached" to a person or other moving object, allowing the area to move with that person.

**NO OBVIOUS EFFECT****+20%**

Physical powers enhanced by this have no visible effect associated with them, and mental powers leave no psionic signature. See *GURPS Psionics* for more information.

**RAPID FIRE****+40%**

This adds one to the RoF for an attack power. This can be taken more than once, each successive enhancement adding another attack. Remember – the user does not *have* to make his maximum number of attacks.

*Example:* Flamin' Jane purchases her Fireball power with the Rapid Fire enhancement x2 (+80%). This would allow her to throw up to three fireballs with each use of the power.

**REDUCED FATIGUE COST****+20%**

This only applies to powers and advantages that cost fatigue. Each time you buy Reduced fatigue Cost, it cuts the fatigue cost of the ability by 1 per turn. You may buy it any number of times.

**RICOCHET****+20%**

This enhancement may only be applied to attack powers. Your attack can be bounced off objects on its way to a target. Each purchase of this modifier gives you one bounce,

with no upper limit on the number of bounces. A character using a ricocheting attack must make a skill roll for each bounce, at a cumulative -1 for each bounce after the first, to continue on path to the target.

A successful Ricochet attack may take an opponent by surprise. The target must roll against DX or IQ (whichever is higher) *minus* the number of bounces. If the roll is unsuccessful, they get no active defense against the attack.

The GM should require the player to sketch or explain the path of the bouncing attack, and should determine the possibility of hitting something or someone in the path. The GM should also use common sense – an attacker in an open field has nothing to bounce off of!

If the attack has the Rapid Fire enhancement, Ricochet must be purchased separately for each additional attack (as per Homing, p. 50).

**SELECTIVE EFFECT****+50%**

Applied to an Area Effect power, this lets the user select which targets are actually affected by the attack. This lets you make a wide-area attack without hurting innocent people or your friends.

**STUNNING****+10%**

This enhancement is only useful in campaigns that do not use the optional Stun Damage rules (p. 84). If those rules are used, this enhancement is available for free on all attacks.

An attack enhanced with Stunning may, at the player's option, be declared non-lethal. All damage is assessed normally, but anything after Hit Points or HT is reduced to -1 is lost. It is *impossible* to kill someone directly when the Stunning enhancement is active (of course, the player doesn't *have* to use the enhancement all the time, and knockback could still push someone off a building, etc.).



## WALL

+30%

A power that is normally Area, or has the Area enhancement, can be set up as a line of hexes, filled with the substance or effect of the Wall, affecting anyone or anything crossing through it. For every 1-hex radius in your Area Affected, you get a 3-hex-long (9 yards) wall. Advantages modified with Area Effect and this enhancement create 1 hex per 2 points of HT. This allows the power to be used for a super-block (see p. 81)!

If you buy this enhancement twice, you can form the wall into any shape you choose.

A physical Wall created with this enhancement will stop attacks as though it had been created normally. A non-physical wall must have the Affects Others enhancement to protect anyone except the user.

## LIMITATIONS

Limitations reduce the utility of advantages or super-powers, and reduce the point cost as well. An interesting limitation can not only make a power affordable, but also inspire good roleplaying.

### ACCESSIBILITY

VARIES

This is a catch-all term that can be used to cover all limitations not specifically defined. Accessibility limitations fall into two groups: usable only against certain things or usable only in certain situations.

If the power only works against a limited segment of the population, its modifier is based on how common the target group is. "Usable Only Against Women" would cover roughly half of the population, and would be worth -20%. "Usable Only Against Sea Creatures" would be worth -30% unless the campaign is in a world mostly covered with water, in which case it wouldn't be worth more than -10%. "Usable Only Against



Aliens" would be worth -30% or -40%, depending on the world. "Not Usable Against Redheads" is the same as "Usable Against Everyone But Redheads," and would be a -10% limitation.

The GM shouldn't allow meaningless accessibility limitations! For instance, buying the Lightning Bolt power with the limitation "Only Usable On Enemies" would be worthless. Buying it with "Only Usable on Friends" would be interesting, though!

This same yardstick can be applied to limitations based on the situation. If the ability only works during the day, it would be worth -20%. If it only works in direct sunlight, it would be worth -30%. "Only Works in Water" would be worth -30% on Earth, more on a desert planet, less on an ocean world.

Finally, Accessibility can be linked to the super's actions. The more unusual, difficult, or obnoxious the required action is, the greater the value of the limitation. Some examples:

Only In Altered-Body Form (Body of Fire, Invisible, Insubstantial, and so on): -10%

Only While Playing Trumpet: -20%

Only If Base Attack Penetrates DR: -20%

Only While Flying or Only While Swimming: -30%

The GM must reject any proposed limitation that is already implicit in the super-ability. "Only Under Water" is not an acceptable limitation for Gills or Amphibious, for instance!

### ALWAYS ON

VARIES

This is only available to those "advantages" that would be inconvenient if they couldn't be turned off. For example, to constantly have a Body of Metal is a -20% limitation, whereas to always be a Body of Fire is a -40% limitation! This cost is specified for many advantages; the GM can add new costs as appropriate for new abilities.

### COSTS FATIGUE

VARIES

When this limitation is taken, each use of the power costs fatigue immediately. You can spend enough fatigue points to take you down to 0 (and unconsciousness), but not beyond. For every 2 points of fatigue the power costs you, you receive -10% - up to a maximum of -50%, which would cost 10 fatigue per use.

This limitation can also be purchased for a super advantage. In this case, each minute that the advantage is on is "one use."

Example: Purple Haze's Insubstantiality costs him 6 points of fatigue each use. This would be a -30% limitation.

### DIFFERENTIAL EFFECT

VARIES

The power has a reduced effect against some kinds of targets, figured as in Accessibility, above. For instance, "Usable Only Against Women" is the same as "Not Against Men," and is worth -20%. So "Half Damage Against Men" is only half as inconvenient a limitation, and is worth half that: -10%.

Any sort of differential limitation can be created this way. Use the Accessibility rules to determine what the value would be, if that target could not be attacked at all. Then adjust downward as appropriate for the amount of damage that is actually done.

Note that "Double Damage" effects can be achieved the same way. For instance, if you want to do double damage against blondes, start by figuring the value of "Blondes Only" - call it -40%. That's the same as "Not Against Non-Blondes." So, doing only half damage against non-blondes is -20%. Now, buy the power at the level you want to have against blondes, and apply the -20% limitation "Half Damage against Non-Blondes." You can then, if you choose, list the half-power

attack on your sheet with the notation "Doubled Against Blondes." It sounds much better, even though the attack was worked out the other way.

### **EMERGENCIES ONLY**

**-30%**

The power is triggered by your fear or excitement, and cannot be used under "routine" conditions. The GM is the final arbiter of the emotional state of your character. The GM may rule that multiple successive failures of your power make you angry enough that it begins to work, but this is entirely up to him.

### **EXCLUSIVITY**

**-10%**

This can only be applied to a power or advantage that has multiple (more than one) enhancements. It restricts the use of enhancements to one at a time!

*Example:* The Brain might have bought Ice Spear with both Homing and Explosive Effect. If he took Exclusivity for it, he couldn't use them simultaneously.

### **FATIGUE DAMAGE ONLY**

**-20%**

All damage that you do with this power is fatigue only and can never be used as a deadly attack. See p. 84.

### **FICKLE**

**VARIABLE**

Your ability has the disturbing tendency to stop working suddenly. A Fickle power always works right if you have not used it for a 24-hour period. After that use, and after every successive use, you must make the Fickleness roll: roll the Fickleness number, or less, to get the power to work. A failed roll means that power is unavailable for the next 5d turns. When this time is up, the power will work normally on the next usage - but you must make another roll *after* that usage!

As elsewhere, for an advantage, a "use" is one minute of activation; roll at the end of each minute to see if the advantage quits working.

For an Fickleness number of 5, this limitation is worth -70%; for 8, -30%; for 11, -20%; and for 14, worth -10%.

### **FULL POWER ONLY**

**-10%**

This modifier is only available for attack powers. You cannot elect to "pull" your attack by reducing the Power level you use. You must roll maximum damage for it.

### **KNOCKBACK ONLY**

**-40%**

Attacks made with this power do only Knockback damage (p. B106), but this damage is doubled. The target will take normal damage if he is knocked into a wall, a roof, and so on.

### **LEAVES MENTAL SIGNATURE**

**-10%**

This is only appropriate for physical powers. In addition to having a visible physical effect, this power leaves a mental signature that a Signature Sniffer (see *GURPS Psionics*) can detect. In a campaign where psi doesn't exist, this is a meaningless limitation and should be disallowed.

### **LIMITED USE**

**VARIABLE**

This power can only be used a certain number of times per day; then it is unavailable for a 24-hour "recharge" period. The value of this limitation depends on the number of uses per day allowed. 1 per day = -40%, 2 per day = -30%, 3 or 4 per

day = -20%, 5 or 6 per day = -10%. More than 6 uses per day does not constitute a significant limitation.

If this limitation is applied to an advantage, each hour (or fraction thereof) that it is on constitutes one "use."

### **NO KNOCKBACK**

**-10%**

This may only be applied to attack powers. A power with this limitation will *never* do any knockback, no matter how many points of damage it inflicts.

### **NUISANCE EFFECT**

**VARIABLE**

Your ability has an annoying side effect of some sort - something that actually causes harm to you or those around you, or that causes you a *serious* inconvenience. The GM must approve any such nuisance effect and set its value, ruthlessly forbidding abusive and pointless effects and allowing points only for those effects that genuinely limit the power's value.

A valuable power cannot be taken as a nuisance effect. "Kills everyone within a mile" is not an acceptable nuisance effect.

Note that a harmless nuisance is merely a special effect. If your Summon Wolves spell also brings a dozen gerbils, this is amusing but worth no points.

*Examples:* If any use of your ability kills all the grass within two blocks, this is a -10% limitation, and could be used to justify a negative reaction modifier.

If any use of your ability makes you look ugly and disgusting, or requires you to perform some distressing ritual, this is a -5% limitation for each -1 of reaction in those who see it used.

### **RECOIL**

**-40%**

This limitation is only available for attack powers. You are knocked back 1 hex per 8 points of damage (round up!) that you do with an attack. This figure is based on the total rolled on the dice, and ignores all DR, Armor Piercing, etc. Your Increased Density, size, or anything else doesn't matter. If you roll 25 points on a 7d attack, you are knocked directly away from your target for 4 hexes (and must make a DX roll or fall down).

### **REDUCED RANGE**

**-5%**

Each time this limitation is taken, the range of a power is reduced by half (round down). A maximum of three levels of Reduced Range may be taken.

### **RESISTED BY X**

**-20%**

This limitation can only be applied to powers which: a) affect others and b) produce an effect that, in the GM's opinion, is undesirable (after all, no one would *ever* resist having DR added, for instance). This limitation cannot be taken on super advantages.

A super-power limited with this is resisted by ST, HT, DX, IQ, or Will (versus the PC's skill roll when activating his super-power). This limitation may be purchased up to two times (for a total of -40%) for two different attributes.

If someone successfully resists your super-power, you are at a cumulative -2 to skill if you attempt to use it on them again within 1 hour. So if they successfully resist three times in a row, your skill is at -6!

### **STUN DAMAGE ONLY**

**-20%**

This limitation is only available if the optional Stun rules are being used. All damage that you do with this power is Stun (p. 84), and it can *never* be used as a deadly attack.

### TAKES EXTRA TIME

-10%

Your power takes two seconds of concentration, rather than one. You can take this limitation any number of times, doubling the time required to activate the power each time. Note that a power with this limitation cannot be used to block or parry.

This limitation increases the time required to activate an advantage in the same manner. This cannot be combined with the Instantaneous enhancement. If applied to one of the rare advantages that normally activates instantly, like Transformation, the first level of Takes Extra Time makes the change take one second.

### TAKES RECHARGE

VARIABLE

Your super-power requires "recharging" after each use. If this is applied to an advantage, the advantage is unavailable during the recharge period. Value of the limitation depends on the time between uses: 5 seconds: -10%; 15 seconds: -20%.

Longer recharge times would make combat powers almost worthless, and don't affect non-combat powers much. A recharge time of an hour is a -30% limitation; longer recharge times are not valid as limitations (but see *Limited Use*, above).

### TOUCH ONLY

-20%

Your power will only work if you touch the intended subject – you have an effective Range of 0, no matter what your Power level.

### UNCONTROLLABLE

-30%

Your power has a tendency to manifest itself even when it is undesirable or inappropriate. Whenever the GM rules you are in a stressful situation, you must make a Will roll to keep control of your power – even if you did not intend to use it at all!

This roll can never be higher than a 13 no matter what your Will. On a failed roll, the GM takes over your power, playing it as though it were a separate entity of hostile or prankish nature. Your power will go after obvious foes first, and will never turn on you, but nobody else is safe.

### UNRELIABLE

VARIABLE

Sometimes your super-power works and sometimes it doesn't! It just comes and goes; you've never identified why. This is completely separate from the skill roll to hit a target. You can have Skill 15 and still have problems making it work! This limitation is good for powers, but will work on very few advantages – the GM should think carefully to make sure the proposed use makes sense.

Every time you want to use the power, you must roll the activation number (see below) or less on 3d. Once you succeed, the power will work for that particular use. When you cease using the power, another activation roll will be required to start it again.

If it fails to activate, you may continue to try on subsequent turns, at no penalty. Each successive attempt costs 1 point of fatigue. If your ST drops below 3, you must rest until all fatigue is regained before you can attempt to use the power again.

For an activation number of 5 or less, this limitation is worth -70%; for 8 or less, it is worth -30%; for 11 or less, -20%; and for 14 or less, -10%.



## SUPER-POWERS

These are super abilities that require some training, and a success roll, to use properly.

*Note: Even if an explanation or physical justification is given for the way a super-power works, the player is free to ignore it when describing the way his character's abilities function, as long as the game mechanics and effects remain the same.*

Super-powers have a number of characteristics that describe their performance – Area/Amount Affected, Damage, and Duration being the most common. All of these can be modified by application of the appropriate enhancements and limitations. *Unless stated otherwise in the individual power descriptions, the following standards apply.*

**Area Affected:** Ranged powers only affect one target – a person, a vehicle, a door, etc.

**Area effect powers,** unmodified, affect a radius of one hex per five full levels of Power, minimum 1 (e.g., Power 0-9 affects 1 hex, 10-14 affects a radius of 2 hexes, 15-19 3 hexes, and so on). A single hex is an area 3' across and 6' tall; additional area adds radius but not height. This can be modified with the *Increased Area* enhancement (p. 50). See the sidebar, p. 30 for a table converting radius into hexes affected.

**Amount Affected:** Some powers will only work against a certain amount of material. The individual power descriptions cover this.

**Damage:** Any power that causes physical damage does 1d per level of Power. This damage is assumed to be crushing, but can be modified by the *Cutting* and *Impaling* enhancements (p. 50).

**Duration:** reflects how long a power's effect lasts. Unless noted otherwise, duration is 1 second per level of power (this is the default when designing a new power.) Some powers have a different duration, and for some, duration is irrelevant. These are noted in the power description. Duration can be modified with the *Increased Duration* enhancement (p. 50). If a super loses consciousness, the remaining Duration on his powers immediately drops to 0 – *things created by him immediately disappear.*

**Range:** See *Targeting*, p. 30.

Each power is listed with *Name* ([Ranged or Area]/[Physical or Mental]), and *Level Cost* (LC).



## SUPER-POWER LIST

### ABSORB ATTRIBUTE (RANGED/MENTAL) LC: 5

This super-power allows you to drain an opponent's ST, HT, DX, or IQ. The victim resists with a Quick Contest between your power and the appropriate attribute + Strong or Weak Will. Points are drained away at the rate of 1 per turn, and are applied to your own attribute; drained ST can only add to your ST, HT to your HT, etc. The number of points you can drain from a single victim is equal to your Power (or Power $\times$ 5 in the case of Enhanced ST, below).

When draining ST from a victim with the Enhanced ST advantage (p. 39), points are drained at five times the normal rate, and can be stored at five times the normal rate.

The victim regains points at the rate of 1 per 10 minutes; this is the same rate at which you lose them. Enhanced ST is regained at this rate as well (not five times as fast). This super-power may not be enhanced with the Increased Duration modifier.

This power must be bought separately for each attribute.

### ABSORB MATTER (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 7

This power allows you to absorb up to Power squared pounds of material (in any form) at one time. The matter so absorbed may be held up to Power minutes before it must be expelled. You can expel any absorbed object at will. If you have more than one object absorbed at once, you must make a skill roll to release the right one. A failure means the wrong thing came out – a critical failure means the object disappears! You may hold any number of objects as long as their combined weight doesn't exceed your weight limit.

If you are knocked unconscious or killed, any objects absorbed will immediately be expelled.

This cannot be used on living matter.

*Special Limitation:* Absorbed matter is limited to one form (gas, liquid, solid). -30%.

### ALTER (RANGED/MENTAL) LC: 5

A modern-day alchemist, you can transform lead into gold, or uranium into talcum powder. This power will work only on non-living material, and will not work on part of an object. The GM will judge whether something is a "part" or a "whole." You can only alter a substance that you have Analyzed (see below) into another substance that you have Analyzed. This power can affect up to Power $\times$ 5 pounds of material (e.g., a super with Power 10 could Alter a 50-lb. object).

*Example:* If you have Power 12, you couldn't transform part of a wall into dust. But a gun weighing less than 60 lbs. could be changed into chocolate . . .



If you are trying to alter something *inside* of an object, an appropriate skill roll (Mechanic, Surgeon, Engineer, etc.) must be made at -3; if it is inside a living being, the target resists with HT.

The duration of a transformation varies from material to material. In general, an Alteration to a gas or liquid is permanent, while an Altered solid will revert to normal form after Power minutes.

*Example:* To alter a bullet embedded in someone's stomach to water would require a successful Surgery or Anatomy-3 roll, then a successful skill roll.

*Special Enhancement:* Doesn't require Analyze. +30%.

### ANALYZE (RANGED/MENTAL) LC: 1

You can quickly analyze and identify unknown chemical compounds. Unless you have Chemistry or some similar power, though, your information will be very general (e.g., "This is poison," or "This is acid.") It takes 15-Power minutes to analyze a substance. Above Power 15, substances can be Analyzed in 1 turn.

### ANIMATE (RANGED/MENTAL) LC: 4

The power allows you to give any object a semblance of life. Maximum size is limited to 25 pounds per level of Power.

Animated objects are not automatically under control, however, but will react as animals (IQ 3) unless the object was initially shaped like an intelligent being (a statue, for instance), in which case it will react with an IQ of 9. You have a +1 on its reaction for every point by which you made the skill roll. A critical failure animates the object but makes it hostile!

ST and DX of the animated object will be 2 points for every 3 levels of Power; HT will be identical to the HT of the original object. Duration is normal.

See *Control Animated Object*, p. 57.

### ANIMATE PLANT (AREA/MENTAL) LC: 3

You can give the semblance of animate life to plants in your area. Plants thus animated will act and react as animals of IQ 3; they will obey vocal commands issued by you. The abilities of animated plants will vary by type. Grasses and vines may make Binding attacks (see p. 56); bushes and trees may lash out with their branches for crushing damage. For all such attacks, the plants roll against your Animate Plants *skill* to hit, and their Binding power is equal to your Power. The HT of plants may be taken from the table on p. B125. Animated plants may also uproot and move around at Move 1.

### ANIMATE SHADOW (RANGED/MENTAL) LC: 5

Shadows will spring to life and attack your enemies! On a successful skill roll, one shadow will animate and envelop a foe. The shadow is made of a filmy, web-like material of the deepest black with PD 1, DR 2, HT 10, and Move 5. Any light-based attack does double damage to the creature.

The shadow's hit roll is equal to your skill. A successful hit drains 2 points of fatigue from the victim – DR doesn't protect from this! If the subject's ST reaches 0, the shadow will begin draining HT at 1 point per turn until the victim dies.

When the duration expires (or at any time you wish to banish the shadow), you must make a skill roll at -1 for every victim that the shadow killed. If you succeed, the shadow is destroyed. If you fail, the shadow will follow and attack you!

If there are no shadows, (in a pitch-black cave, for instance) you cannot animate anything!

## ANTI-G (RANGED/MENTAL)

LC: 3

You have the ability to lower the gravity on an object, even to the point where objects fall away from the Earth. Each level of Power allows a 10% reduction in the normal gravity. At Power 10, gravity is neutralized. Each further reduction causes the object to be repelled rather than attracted by the Earth. Each attack with Anti-G will work on a single object of up to 250 lbs. per level of Power. It will not work on part of an object (GM's call).

Maximum jumping height is increased by low gravity. Divide 1 by the new gravity to get the jump modifier.

*Example:* Gravitator has Anti-G-15(12). He uses his power on the getaway car belonging to the Beagle Gang, notorious bank robbers. The gang runs out of the bank only to see their car moving away from the Earth at 20% of normal falling speed. Gravitator "pulled" his power, using only enough to float the car's weight, so it gets only about 30 feet up before the Duration expires and it falls to the ground!

*Example:* Gravitator needs to jump a 30-foot fence. His ST is 10, so he could jump about 3½ feet off the ground with a running start. He wants to decrease gravity's pull on him to 10% of normal. He can now make his 35-foot jump. Since gravity is pulling on him at only 10% of normal, he falls slowly and safely to a landing . . . not like a small weight in normal gravity, but like a man in 10% gravity!

## BIND (RANGED/PHYSICAL)

LC: 6

You have the ability to freeze an object in place. The "cause" can be anything – a shimmering green hand wraps around the subject, the earth's natural magnetic field grabs him, or the ground rises up to engulf his legs. The victim resists with ST versus Power+Skill. If the victim wins the contest by 3 or less, he isn't bound, but has his next Move cut in half. On a tie, his move is only 1. If the victim loses, he is treated as pinned, and may attempt to break free each round by winning a Quick Contest of ST vs. Power×3.

*The maximum ST you can bind is equal to Power×3.*

You can layer binding attacks on an already-bound victim. Each successive successful Bind reduces the victim's escape attempt by -1.

*Special Limitation:* The victim must be touching the ground. -20%.

*Special Limitation:* The victim is frozen in place, but can otherwise act normally (not pinned). -40%.

*Example:* The Fist has Bind-17(15). He is being charged by a ST 20 tiger. Since he can affect a creature up to ST 45 (15×3), this is well within his ability. The tiger is 3 hexes in size (+1), 5 yards away, and charging at 20 mph (-5), for a total modifier of -4. This brings his skill down to 13, just avoiding a SS penalty. He rolls and gets a 10 – success! The roll beats his Power+Skill by 18; the GM rolls versus the tiger's ST 20 and gets an 11 – not enough to resist. It will be bound until it breaks free, rolling vs. a 45(!) or until the 15-second Duration of the Bind expires. And the Fist could keep adding further binds!

## BLIND (RANGED/PHYSICAL)

LC: 5

This power is resisted by your victim's HT. If you win the contest, he is blinded for the Duration. If you score a critical success, duration is measured in minutes, not turns!

This is a good example of a power that can be customized in an infinite number of ways. The victim might be dazzled by

a laser beam, or surrounded by a thick cloud of insects, or have his eyes blindfolded by metal bands, or perhaps his eyes disappear for the Duration!

## BOND (RANGED/PHYSICAL)

LC: 5

This is a variant of the Alter power. The structure of the target is altered to the point that it melds to another substance and can't be separated without breakage. Amount affected is identical to Alter, but the substance being Bonded does not have to have been Analyzed first. The same restrictions as for Alter apply to items inside an object.

## BUZZSAW (SPECIAL/PHYSICAL)

LC: 3

You can vibrate your hands at hypersonic speeds, leaving them blurred and capable of inflicting massive damage in close combat. Each level of Power adds 1 to your ST when calculating punching damage, and your punches do *impaling* damage at all levels. Roll vs. the Buzzsaw skill rather than DX when punching this way.



## CALL HAIL (AREA/MENTAL)

LC: 1

If there is a rainstorm or snowstorm within your Range, you can turn the rain into hail with a successful skill roll. You may attempt this power once per minute; each success lasts for one minute.

The damage that the hail will do depends on your Power; the higher the Power, the larger the hailstones will become and the harder they will fall!

Hailstones cannot be aimed; they pelt the entire area, doing their damage evenly. Hail is really more of a large-scale nuisance effect than a weapon; anyone being pelted with hailstones must make a Will roll to keep his concentration. Also, visibility in a hailstorm is almost zero, and ground covered with hailstones is as slippery as ice-covered ground.

Power	Hail size and damage per turn
Power 5 or less	Pea; no damage
Power 6-10	Marble; no damage
Power 11-15	Golf ball; 1d-3 damage
Power 16-20	Baseball; 1d-2 damage
Power 21 or more	Grapefruit; 1d-1 damage

**COLOR (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

Alters the color of a single object up to 1 hex in size per level of Power. No other properties are affected by the color change – Green Argonite still acts like Green Argonite, even if the color has been changed to red.

**CONFUSE (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 4**

You have the ability to boggle an opponent – you might do this by psychically attacking him, or by telling a particularly bad pun, or perhaps by opening your trenchcoat. If your foe fails to resist (your power vs. HT), he is *mentally stunned* for one turn per level of Power. Any physical injury (even if it doesn't cause damage – a slap works) will snap the subject out of his confused state.

**CONTROL ANIMAL (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

This power works only on land-dwelling nonhumans of IQ 7 or less. You can control 1 hex of creatures for each level of Power. If you force an animal into a situation that will result in injury, make a Quick Contest of Skills between your power and its HT. If you win, it carries out the order.

*Example:* Power 14 would let you control 2 7-hex animals, or 14 1-hex animals, or a 14-hex swarm of animals.

*Special Limitation:* Limiting this control to a single type of animal (e.g., the cat family) would be a -60% limitation.

**CONTROL ANIMATED OBJECT (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

You can control an animated object you created, or attempt to wrest control of another's creation. To seize someone else's creature, you must win a Quick Contest of Power modified by the range to the creature and by the difference in skill (e.g., if your skill is 14 and your foe's is 12, you would be at a +2 in the contest).

**CONTROL FIRE (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

You can control a blaze! This power allows you to contain a fire within your area, allowing it to burn itself out without spreading. Alternately, you can cause it to spread faster or leap higher. You can make a fire grow at the rate of 1 hex radius per 2 turns with a successful skill roll (roll again for each growth), or cause the flames to leap into the sky to a height of 1 hex per radius of the fire. This power has no Duration; it requires constant concentration.

**CONTROL FISH (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

Identical to Control Animal, but only works with aquatic creatures. Aquatic mammals such as whales and dolphins fall into this category.

**CONTROL LIQUID (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 2**

You can shape a liquid into any form you desire, or make it move around. At the end of the duration, the liquid will collapse into a puddle unless you can renew your control instantly. This cannot be used to control liquid within a living being.

**CONTROL PLANT (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 2**

You can control plants in a radius of one hex per level of Power. They will part to allow you to pass freely, or entangle to slow pursuit by 50%. The plants are restricted to the spot they are in; they cannot uproot and follow you! But see Animate Plant, above.

**CONTROL TEMPERATURE (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

You can alter the temperature in the area by 5° per level of power, in either direction. The temperature can never be raised higher than 150° F, or lowered below -150° F. This cannot be done repeatedly in the same area, and duration is expressed in *minutes*, not turns. Changes take place at 10° per turn, and reverse themselves at the same rate when the Duration ends.

**CONTROL WEATHER (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 5**

You can affect the weather in your area, creating or calming storms at your whim. For every 2 levels of Power you possess, you can shift the weather by one step on the *Weather Table* (below). You can only use this power once in a particular area – then you must wait for the Duration to expire before using it again. Duration is figured in *minutes* for this power: Power 17 will give a 17-minute weather change.

*Example:* Power 10 would allow you to shift the weather five places. If you were in a steady rain, you could churn up gale force winds and thunderstorms. If the skies were totally clear, however, the best you could manage would be a hard rain, with snow or sleet thrown in if the temperature were cold enough. You could turn thunderstorms into a cloudy day with a nice breeze, or calm a tornado down to steady rainfall.

*Note:* The base area of effect for this power is a 10-hex radius. Each level of Increased Area (p. 50) increases this radius by 5x.



*Example:* Control Weather-12(10) would normally cost 50 points for the Power. Three levels of Increased Area would add 60% to this cost (total of 80 points), but would have a radius of (10x5x5x5) 1250 hexes.

#### WEATHER

Totally Clear .....	Wind <5 mph
Partly Cloudy .....	Wind 5 mph
Cloudy .....	Wind 10 mph
Cloudy, Drizzle, or Light Snow .....	Wind 15 mph
Steady Rain or Snow .....	Wind 20 mph
Hard Rain, Snow, or Sleet .....	Wind 25 mph
Deluge, Blizzard, or Heavy Hail .....	Wind 30 mph
Heavy Thunderstorms .....	Wind 40 mph
Gale Force Winds .....	Wind 50 mph
Hurricanes and Tornadoes .....	Wind 75 mph

#### CONTROL WINDS (AREA/MENTAL)

LC: 2

You can raise or lower the wind speed in your area by 5 mph per level of power. This will last Power *minutes* instead of turns.

*Special Enhancement:* The air created forms a sphere that won't leak away into surrounding vacuum. +100%.

#### CREATE DARKNESS (AREA/PHYSICAL)

LC: 3

You can create an area of pitch darkness. See p. B163 for the effect of attacking into or out of a dark hex. The Night Vision advantage will not allow someone to see inside this area – the Dark Vision advantage is needed.

#### CREATE GAS (AREA/PHYSICAL)

LC: 3

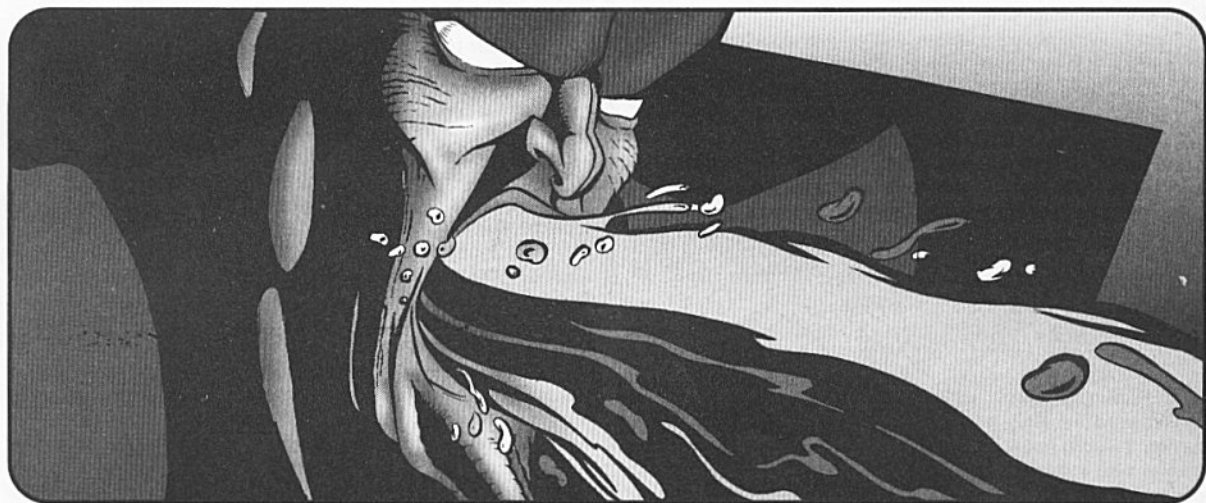
You can create any kind of gaseous atmosphere inside the area of effect. This doesn't allow you to alter the pressure, just the composition of the air – ammonia, nitrogen, or whatever you desire.

The volume affected by this is 1 cubic foot per level of Power. A 6-foot-tall hex encompasses approximately 43 cubic feet. Gas can't be created *inside* a living creature.

#### CREATE LIQUID (RANGED/PHYSICAL)

LC: 1

This power allows you to create 1 gallon per level of Power of any type of liquid you desire. Liquid can't be created *inside* a living creature.



#### COOL (AREA/MENTAL)

LC: 1

You can lower the temperature in an area by up to 10xPower degrees. Otherwise, treat as Control Temperature, above.

#### CREATE AIR (AREA/PHYSICAL)

LC: 1

This power is used to create breathable air at normal atmospheric pressure. Air created in this manner will freely intermix with surrounding gases, and will leak away almost immediately if surrounded by a vacuum. This is best used to refresh the air in a sealed, airtight room or container. "Breathable" refers to the air normally breathed by the creator. Jirel of Jupiter would create a high-pressure area of poisonous gas with this ability – but the GM should raise the LC because the power now has offensive ability.

This power may be used once every 30 minutes.

One 6'-tall hex of air is enough for one inactive person to breathe for 45 minutes.

#### DAMAGE CONTROL (SPECIAL/PHYSICAL)

LC: 3

You can use this power to reduce blood loss and shock from wounds. After taking damage, 5 turns of concentration and a successful skill roll will allow you to recover 1 point of HT for every level of Power, *one try only!* Bleeding will also stop as if you had been bandaged.

This ability will also allow you to flush poisons out of your system. A successful skill roll will neutralize any type of poison in your system – you will take no further damage from it; you only get one attempt to do this per dose of poison. Your roll is adjusted by any HT modifier to resist the poison (see p. B132).

You must buy the Usable on Others enhancement to use this super-power on someone other than yourself. If you buy Area Effect, cost of that enhancement *doubles*, and you must roll separately for each individual you wish to heal.

**DAMPEN (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

You can hinder the function of any electrical device by "slowing" the current that powers the object. This does no damage to most equipment, just turns it off for the duration. Computers (and many other devices) can be damaged merely by slowing them down or turning them off – if you dampen the electrical system of a plane during takeoff, you aren't actually damaging the equipment, but the subsequent crash will be nasty!

If you are dampening a device that has Invulnerability to, or Reflection or Absorption of, Electrical damage, each level subtracts 2 from your effective power.

**DEAFEN (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 3**

You can cause a victim to lose his hearing. Like Blind (p. 56) the exact mechanism is left up to the player (puns are a particularly good choice here!).

This power is resisted by HT. A critical success with this power results in a duration of *hours* rather than turns.

**DECREASE DENSITY (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 6**

This power will decrease an object's density – eventually to the point of insubstantiality. You can affect a 1-hex object if your Power is 10 or less, a 2-hex object at Power 11-15, a 3-hex object at Power 16-20, and so on. Living creatures resist this power with HT if unwilling.

Decreasing density has the following game effects. For every level of Power, you can decrease density by 5%. Weight of the object will drop proportionately. Each 10% subtracts 1 from the amount of damage needed to knock the subject back 1 hex (e.g., if you decrease a normal man's density by 30%, it now only takes 5 points of damage to knock him back 1 hex.) The minimum amount required to knockback 1 hex is 1 point.

DR is also reduced proportionately – when someone is down to 10% of his normal density, a strong super might actually put a fist *through* him! When density is reduced to 25% or less, all blows use the Blow Through rules for impaling weapons (see p. B109) whether they are impaling or not, and all damage is treated as impaling.

At 100% (Power 20) density decrease, an object or person behaves as if it has the Insubstantiality advantage (see p. 41).

**DEHYDRATE (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 8**

You can damage someone by removing liquid from their tissues. Your victim resists with HT. Armor doesn't protect against this, but Toughness does. Certain types of creatures don't have any liquid in their body to drain – robots, some aliens, etc. The GM will determine what (if any) effect this power has on non-humans. You do 1d-2 points damage per level of Power to a victim, minimum 1 point.

**DESTROY LIQUID (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 1**

Lets you destroy 1 gallon per level of Power of a liquid. You cannot use this power on anything that's alive.

**DISINTEGRATE (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 8**

You can cause inanimate objects to crumble into powder. This is a permanent effect – Duration is meaningless! You can affect one pound per level of Power. If your Power isn't strong enough to affect an entire object, you can disintegrate a hole with a diameter of 1" per level of Power. This differs from the spell *Disintegrate*, which can only affect a whole object.



All damage (at the rate of 1d per level of Power) from this power destroys the object's Hit Points. On large objects, Hit Points are only reduced in the area actually being worked on. This power ignores DR.

*Example 1:* Chemico is being mugged by a thug with an AK-47 assault rifle (weight: 10½ lbs.). Chemico has Disintegrate-13(12); he smiles at the mugger, concentrates for 1 turn, and makes his skill roll at 11. A reddish-brown beam shoots from his eyes and the AK-47 crumbles to powder.

*Example 2:* Later that day, Chemico needs to break out of the cell he has been locked in. The door is 2" steel, but the walls are only normal (3") brick. The brick has 40 Hit Points. His damage is 12d, and he rolls 44. Chemico has now bored a hole 12" in diameter in the wall. Two holes later, he's bored a passage large enough to escape!

**DRAIN SKILL (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

This power allows you to drain a normal skill (from any GURPS book except *Supers*, excluding magic and psionics) from someone's mind. You must spend three turns touching your victim; to take a skill from an unwilling subject you must win a Quick Contest between your power level plus Strong or Weak Will vs. the victim's Will.

The Drained skill will return in Power minutes rather than seconds.

This super-power is similar to the *Mimic Skill* ability (p. 62) in that you can take a skill from a foe. In this case, however, you don't gain the skill; your opponent just loses all knowledge of it. If you wish to *steal* a skill from an opponent, you must link (pp. 33 and 51) Drain Skill with Mimic Skill.



### **DRAIN SUPER ABILITY (RANGED/MENTAL)**

**LC: 8**

This power allows you to drain any super advantage or super-power from a foe. When linked with Mimic Super Ability (p. 62), it allows you to gain the ability while your opponent loses it! To drain an ability, you must know that it exists. Sense Super Power (p. 64) allows you to divine a victim's super abilities.

Successful use of this power requires you to win a Quick Contest between your power and the victim's Will in the case of a super advantage, or a Quick Contest of Powers if draining a super-power. The drained ability remains gone for 1 turn per level of Power (as normal); this may be extended with the Increased Duration modifier (p. 50).

### **FIREBALL (RANGED/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 6**

You can hurl a ball of fire at your enemies. It not only burns, but can ignite hair, clothing, or other flammables. This missile can be dodged or blocked, but not parried except with a super-power (see p. 81).

### **FLAME JET (RANGED/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 6**

This power lets you act like a portable flamethrower! The thin stream of fire will stretch 1 hex for each point of damage you roll – it may be dodged or blocked, but not parried except with a super-power.

### **FLASH (AREA/MENTAL)**

**LC: 4**

You can create a flash of light that can blind and confuse those seeing it. Anyone within your area effect radius is automatically blinded for three seconds and at -3 DX for another full minute. Anyone farther out may be affected if they were facing you and had their eyes open at the time (the GM will rule

if someone is affected or not.) Those outside the area get a roll versus HT to avoid some of the flash.

<i>Distance</i>	<i>If HT roll is made</i>	<i>If HT roll is not made</i>
Within 10 hexes of the edge of your area	1 minute at -3 DX	Blinded for 3 turns, -3 DX for one minute
10 to 25 hexes	10 turns at -3 DX	1 minute at -3 DX
26 to 50 hexes	no effect	3 seconds at -3 DX
50+ hexes	no effect	no effect

The effects of this aren't cumulative – once you've flashed someone, he can't be flashed again until he's recovered from the first one!

### **FROST JET (RANGED/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 6**

You can create a stream of frosty ice particles to freeze your opponent. The jet is one foot wide, with a maximum range of 1 hex per point of damage rolled. It can be blocked or dodged, but only a super-parry can parry it.

### **HEALING (RANGED/MENTAL)**

**LC: 3**

On a successful Healing roll, you can restore lost HT up to your own Power. Failure costs 1d fatigue; critical failure also causes 3d damage to you! The fatigue cost of *successful* healing is equal to 1 for every 2 hits healed.

The Healing power is at -2 when the victim is unconscious, and -2 or worse to cure disease. It can't restore a lost limb, and is -6 to restore a crippled but whole limb (each healer only gets one try at any one limb). It can't bring back the dead.

### **ICE SPEAR (RANGED/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 9**

You can hurl a deadly icicle at a foe. This does 1d *impaling* damage for every level of Power. It may be dodged or blocked, but only a super-parry (p. 81) can parry it.

### **ICE SPHERE (RANGED/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 6**

You throw balls of ice that do crushing damage to your foes. They may be dodged or blocked, but only a super-parry can parry it.

### **ICE WALL (RANGED/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 4**

You can create a wall of ice between yourself and a foe, or to block off a passageway, or any other application you can think of! The wall is 1/2" thick per level of Power you have, up to 6' tall, and 1 hex wide. See the sidebar on p. 85 for information on the DR and HT of ice walls. This power can't be enhanced with the Increased Area modifier.

### **ICY SURFACE (AREA/PHYSICAL)**

**LC: 4**

Covers the floor or ground with a quarter-inch sheet of clear ice. Footing on this surface is very precarious. All close combat and melee attacks, *and* all active defenses, are at -3 on an Icy Surface. Other physical skills, including missile and thrown weapon attacks, are at -2. Even walking across an Icy Surface is usually difficult – in general, anyone attempting to walk or run across an Icy Surface must roll against DX-2 as he enters *each* hex. If he fails this roll, he falls to the ice. He may, with another DX-2 roll, attempt to stand on his next turn. Spiked footwear will negate all penalties on ice.

Icy Surfaces are very difficult to see. Anyone not actively watching the ground for ice must make a roll against IQ-3 to notice an Icy Surface before stepping onto it.

**ILLUMINATE (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

You can cause an object or an area to glow, lighting up the surrounding area. Duration is expressed in minutes rather than turns.

**ILLUSION (RANGED (SPECIAL)/MENTAL)****LC: 5**

You can create realistic illusions to baffle and misdirect. For each 3 full levels of Power, you can make a phantasm 1 hex in size. Think of them as holograms; they cannot move, nor can they do damage to anyone. Everyone can see them, and cameras will photograph them! Physical objects pass through the illusion harmlessly, and anyone inside the hex with the illusion can see out normally.

If you are creating an illusion of something you've never seen, everyone who sees it gets an IQ roll on first sight. If they make this roll, they notice something "wrong" with the illusion (not necessarily that it is an illusion, just that there is something strange about it).

Duration is expressed in minutes rather than turns.

*Special Enhancement:* You can animate your illusions, though to move them about, you need the next enhancement as well. +20%.

*Special Enhancement:* You can move your illusions about. This won't normally look natural unless you can also animate them. +20%.

**INCREASE DENSITY (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 4**

You have the ability to make objects or people more dense, which increases their weight. The size of an object you can affect depends on your Power. Power up to 5 can affect a 1-hex object, Power 6-10 a 2-hex object, Power 11-15 a 3-hex object, and so on. Living creatures resist this power with HT.

Each level of Power allows you to increase the weight of an inanimate object 100%, or a living creature by 20%. For every full 100-lb. increase, the subject gets an extra DR 1 against crushing damage (see p. 38), and any knockback is decreased by 1 hex. The extra weight will count as encumbrance if the subject isn't strong enough to carry it, though! Any body weight over 15xST counts as encumbrance.

*Example:* Black Diamond has Power 13. He can increase the weight of a 10-lb. Uzi submachine gun by  $13 \times 10 = 130$  lbs., or to increase the weight of 150-lb. Jonny the Thug who is firing it by 260% ( $2.6 \times 150 = 390$  lbs.) to a total weight of 140 lbs. for the gun, or 540 lbs. for the thug. Since the thug had ST 10, the absolute maximum weight he could carry would be 150 lbs. (15xST) plus 300 lbs. (30xST; see p. B76) for a total maximum of 450 lbs. Jonny would crumple to the ground and lie very still.

If you increase someone's weight beyond the maximum he can carry (30xST), there is a chance that he will take crushing damage. On each turn that a victim's weight is beyond maximum, he must make a HT roll to avoid taking 1d crushing damage (armor doesn't protect, Toughness does), with a minimum 1 point of damage no matter how high his Toughness is. This HT roll is modified by -1 per 100 lbs. he is over maximum weight.

**INCREASE GRAVITY (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 6**

You can afflict any subject with intense gravity, slowing movement and reducing ability to function. Gravity is increased on the subject by 10% for every level of Power you have. Each full 20% increase lowers DX by 1 for everyone attacked, and each 40% increase lowers HT and IQ by 1. Anyone attacked also has their weight increased by the same percentage as the

gravity. Remember, all weight above 15xST is counted as encumbrance.

If the field is enhanced to area effect, all missile fire that enters or leaves this field is at -1 to hit and -1 on damage for every 20% increase in gravity. The field only extends 2 yards above ground, though!

Anyone affected by a high-G field, or stepping in, must make a DX roll versus his modified DX to stay standing. If he falls, he takes 2 + (encumbrance) turns to rise. Treat this fall as 2 yards x gravity to determine falling distance.

**LASER (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 9**

You can generate beams of coherent light that do 1d-1 impaling damage per level of the Power. They may be dodged or blocked, but not parried except with a super-parry.



**LIGHTNING (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 7**

You can shoot bolts of electricity through the air, frying those who oppose you! Any electrical equipment hit with this will not only take damage, but will react as if hit with a Surge (see p. 64). A lightning bolt *cannot* be fired through a metal grid (bars, a chainlink fence, etc.) as it will ground out and disappear, and metal armor doesn't protect much – treat it as PD 0, DR 1.

*Special Limitation:* Only works outdoors during a thunderstorm: -60%.

**MAGNETIZE (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 5**

This power will make any object magnetic. You can affect up to 10 lbs. of material per level of Power. The strength of attraction is also based on Power. All ferrous metals (iron, steel, nickel, and cobalt) are attracted to the object as if a Telekinetic (see p. B172) of your Power level was moving them in that direction. Determine speed from the sidebar on p. B173.

If the object magnetized weighs less than the ferrous metal, the object will move toward the metal!

*Special Limitation:* The power affects ferrous metals *only*. -30%.

**METABOLISM CONTROL (SPECIAL/PHYSICAL)****LC: 1**

You can control your "involuntary" biological functions such as pulse, blood flow, digestion, and respiration. This allows you to enter a deathlike trance; a doctor must win a Quick Contest of Skills (Physician-2 vs. skill level) to realize that you aren't dead. While in this trance, you are unaware of your surroundings. You may set a mental "alarm clock" that will awaken you after a certain amount of time has passed, and you will automatically awaken if you take any damage.

Oxygen requirements are reduced when using this power. Each level of Power reduces by 5% the air needed to stay alive.

With the Affects Others enhancement, this skill will let you put others into a trance, but not harm them in any way.

*Example:* If you were trapped in a room with only two

hours of air left, and had Power 14, entering the trance would reduce your oxygen requirements by 70%, allowing you to breathe for over 6½ hours (120 minutes/0.3).

**MIMIC SKILL (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 2**

This power allows you to copy a normal skill (from any *GURPS* book except *Supers*, excluding magic and psionics) from someone's mind. You should keep track of how many skills you have absorbed – this number can never exceed your Power.

You must spend three turns touching your victim; to take a skill from an unwilling subject you must win a Quick Contest between your skill level plus Strong or Weak Will vs. the victim's Will.

The powers you absorb are at (*your stat*)+4 or the subject's skill level, whichever is *lower*, and last 4d days.

The victim does *not* forget the skill during this time – but see *Drain Super Ability*, p. 60.

**MIMIC SUPER-ABILITY (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 7**

This is similar to Drain Super Ability (p. 60), but the victim doesn't lose use of the ability after you successfully mimic it! As for Drain Super-Ability, each power must be targeted separately. You may mimic up to Power abilities at one time.

It takes two full turns of concentration to mimic a super ability. At the beginning of the third turn, you roll a Quick Contest between your Mimic Super-Ability skill + Strong or Weak Will and the victim's Will (assuming an unwilling victim). An unconscious victim cannot resist. If you make a critical failure, you gain a random mental disadvantage as per Morph Memory (p. 63).

Super-powers are mimicked at (DX or IQ)-4 or the victim's skill level, whichever is *lower*. Just because you have the ability doesn't make you good at it.

Mimicked super-powers are retained for 1d days; mimicked super advantages are retained for 1d-2 days (minimum 1).

Use of this power requires an expenditure of 5 fatigue whether it is successful or not.

**MIMICRY (SPECIAL/PHYSICAL)****LC: 2**

You can duplicate any familiar sound, or any unfamiliar sound that you have memorized. To memorize a sound, you must spend five minutes listening to it, and make a successful IQ roll.

This power can also be used to imitate voices. To memorize someone's voice, you must spend at least one hour listening to the person talk, either live or on tape, and make a successful IQ roll.

If you fail your memorization roll, you must wait at least one day before attempting to memorize the same sound or voice.

**MOLD EARTH (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 4**

You can mold earth into any shape you choose. When the duration expires, the earth will crumble back to the ground. This power doesn't move the ground quickly enough to be used as a weapon unless the victim is unconscious or otherwise restrained from moving as the ground rises up and covers him.



**MOLD STONE (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 4**

This power allows you to shape 2 lbs. of stone or brick per level of Power. The stone will retain the shape it is molded into; you could make a doorway through a brick wall given enough time. (One brick weighs approximately 3½ lbs.)

**MORPH (SPECIAL/MENTAL)****LC: 40 FOR****FIRST LEVEL, 3 FOR SUBSEQUENT**

This power allows you to assume the form of any creature or person you've memorized (see below). The cost for the first level – the basic Morph ability – is 40 points. Each level of Power lets you vary your size and proportionate mass plus or minus 10% (e.g., Power 8 can gain or reduce mass by 80%). Thus, at the basic level you can take the form of anyone near your size. At higher levels you can change your size significantly.

Above Power 9, you cannot lose further mass – you cannot have less than 10% of your normal mass.

When you change, you gain the *physical* appearance of your target (including his voice), but don't get any of his knowledge, powers, or memories. You *do* retain all of your own powers, though, and your attributes remain unchanged. It takes 1 turn per 10% change in mass for the morphing to finish, and the same amount of time to change back into original form. If you include clothing in the change, it cannot be removed, as it's actually part of your body!

When impersonating someone, there is a chance you will be discovered by his associates, friends, or family. Every time you encounter someone who is familiar with the person you're imitating, that person gets an IQ roll to spot a difference, modified as follows.

Casual acquaintance: .....	-4
Daily acquaintance: .....	-2
Friend:.....	+2
Close Friend: .....	+4
Close Family:.....	+6
Empathy Advantage: .....	+3

A few powers will help reduce your chances of being spotted; Acting 12+ subtracts 2 from the IQ roll, Fast Talk 12+ subtracts 1.

*Example:* Morphomoan ("The Samoan Shifter") wishes to morph into Zeerox, the Duplicating Girl, whom he memorized during a night of drunken revelry at SuperCon earlier this year. Morphomoan would physically appear to be Zeerox, but would not have Zeerox's Enhanced ST or Duplication advantages, nor would he be able to use her Blinding power.

*Special Enhancement:* Doesn't need Morph Memory. +100%.

**MORPH MEMORY (SPECIAL/MENTAL)****LC: 2**

You use this power to add forms to your Morph "shape catalog." Each level of Power allows you to learn one form. To learn a new form, you must spend 3 turns touching the subject. If the subject is intelligent, conscious, and uncooperative, you must win a Contest of Skills between his Will and your skill with Morph Memory. (Your Strong or Weak Will is added/subtracted from your skill.)

Use of this power is tiring – it costs 10 fatigue points per use whether you succeed or fail. In the case of a critical failure, you acquire one of your subject's mental disadvantages;

if he doesn't have any, the GM will assign 1d Quirks that you pick up. This disadvantage is permanent (until bought off with earned character points). In the case of an animal, you will acquire some of the mannerisms of that species, requiring 5 points to buy off.

If you wish, you can "overwrite" a memorized form with a new one.

**NEUTRALIZE FIRE (AREA/PHYSICAL)****LC: 2**

Lets you absorb fire into your body . . . useful for putting out forest fires or defending against flamethrowers. You are at -1 to skill per hex between you and the flames. If you are in the middle of a large fire, the outlying portions of the fire are drawn inward to you, decreasing the fire by the number of hexes encompassed by your Area. This power requires 1 turn per hex radius to absorb.

You won't take damage from a normal fire as long as you are neutralizing it. If you fail a single skill roll, you're unhurt, but if you fail two in a row, you will be burned on that turn, and on subsequent turns when you fail.

*Example:* Flamin' Jane has Power 10, and 2 levels of Increased Area, so she can affect a 4-hex radius fire, which encompasses 37 hexes (see sidebar, p. 30). She is in a 70-hex office building that is completely on fire, so at the end of 4 turns the fire is down to 33 hexes. In another 4 turns she could extinguish it!

This assumes a 500° fire. For a much hotter fire, reduce the effect proportionately. If Jane were in a 1,000-degree fire, she would neutralize only half as many hexes at a time.

This power can also be used to give extra DR against flame attacks. A successful skill roll must be made to turn it on; Duration is normal. During that time, DR vs. flame is equal to the number of hexes of normal fire that the power could neutralize, divided by 3. So Jane can use her power to get an extra DR of 37/3, or 12, against flame attacks.

**NEUTRALIZE SOUND (AREA/PHYSICAL)****LC: 2**

You can create an area of absolute silence. Anyone inside this area can only communicate by sign language, gesture, writing, or telepathy.

**PLANT GROWTH (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

You can cause unusual growth in plants within your area. You must take the Selective Effect (p. 51) enhancement if you wish to only affect certain plants. Acceleration causes the plant to experience Power years growth in 1 turn. Each use of this power costs 3 fatigue. You can use this power up to Power times on an area or a plant; after that, it cannot be affected for a year of real time.

**RING OF FIRE (AREA/PHYSICAL)****LC: 3**

You can surround an area with a ring of flames. All targeting into, out of, and through this ring is treated as if it were a hex of darkness (see p. B163). No one inside the ring will take any damage unless he tries to cross it; then he takes damage equal to half the normal Power of the ring's creator. This fire will not ignite flammable material other than that which passes through it.

**SAND JET (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 4**

This power allows you to create a thin jet of sand that will blind and confuse your enemies. The jet can be dodged or blocked, but not parried except by a super-power. Anyone hit with the jet will be blinded until they can make two successful HT rolls in a row (one per turn). This jet will also wreak havoc with almost any machinery!

**SENSE ANIMAL (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

This will tell you the number, type, and location of any land animals or birds within your Area of Effect. All areas are expressed in *miles* rather than hexes. The GM makes the skill roll; on a failure, he lies to you about what you sense.

**SENSE FISH (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

You can sense the number, type, and location of any aquatic animals within your Area of Effect. All areas are expressed in *miles* rather than hexes. The GM makes the skill roll; on a failure, he lies to you about what you sense.

**SENSE PLANT (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

You can sense the number, type, and location of any plants within your Area of Effect. All areas are expressed in *miles* rather than hexes. The GM makes the skill roll; on a failure, he lies to you about what you sense.

**SENSE SUPER POWER (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 3**

A successful use of this power allows you to tell if there are any super-powered beings in the area; a second successful roll will locate them. If used against a specific super, roll a Quick Contest of your Power versus his Will. If you win, you learn what his most powerful (GM's call) super ability is. You may continue to use this power against the same foe. Each successful use reduces his chance of resisting by a cumulative -1. The second successful roll detects his second most powerful ability, and so forth. Normal radius is 10 yards rather than 1, and each

level of Increased Area adds an additional 10 yards to the radius. The GM makes the skill roll; on a failure, he lies to you about what you sense.

**SHAPE ICE (AREA/MENTAL)****LC: 1**

You can mold ice in the area into any shape you choose. If the form is stable, it will remain after the duration expires. If unstable, it will collapse.

**SHOCKWAVE (AREA/PHYSICAL)****LC: 9**

A shockwave attack inflicts 1d crushing damage per level of Power to everyone in the area of effect; knockback direction is in a straight line away from the center of the area. If you choose to be at the center of the effect, you take no damage. If you aren't the center, and get caught in the outlying area, you take normal damage.

**SMOKE (AREA/PHYSICAL)****LC: 3**

You can cause an area to fill with thick smoke (color choice is a special effect!). For line-of-sight and vision purposes, treat this as a hex of the Darkness spell (see p. B163). Anyone inside this cloud must roll against HT or be temporarily blinded for 1d-3 turns after he leaves the smoke until his eyes stop watering.

If you take the Doesn't Harm User enhancement (+20%), you can see through your own smoke, and it won't harm you.

Anyone with the Nictating Membrane advantage is immune to the blinding effects of the smoke cloud.

**SONIC BLAST (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 7**

You can emit a burst of focused, high-frequency sound that can pummel flesh and shatter brittle objects, doing 1d damage per level of Power. Crystalline objects (and most metals are crystalline unless specifically alloyed to be amorphous) are vulnerable to a Sonic Blast; treat it as an armor-piercing attack (p. 49) which bypasses  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the DR. One further level of Armor Piercing can be bought as an enhancement.

*Special Limitation:* No armor-piercing effects against metal and crystal. -20%.

**STONE MISSILE (RANGED/PHYSICAL)****LC: 6**

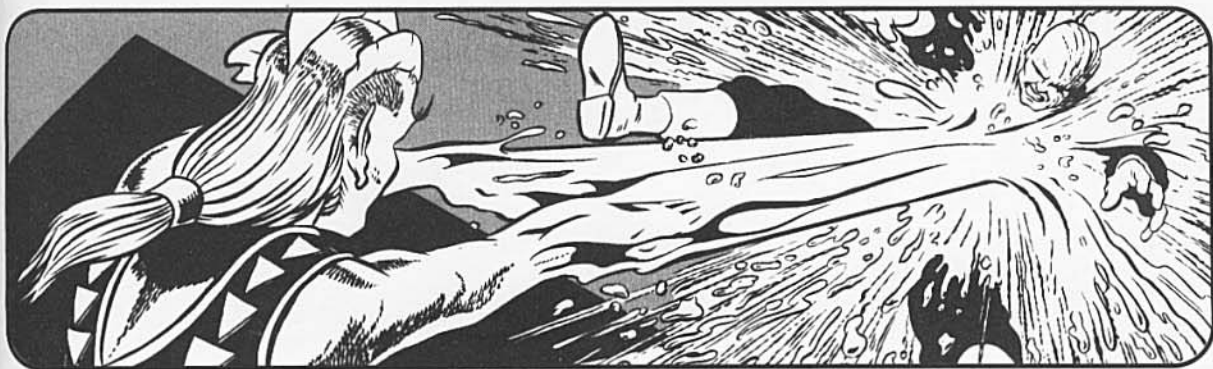
You can create and hurl a rock that does crushing damage upon impact. This missile can be dodged or blocked, but not parried except with a super-power (see p. 81).

**SURGE (RANGED/MENTAL)****LC: 4**

This power causes a power surge in an electrical device. For every 2 points you beat your skill roll by, there is a cumulative 1 in 6 chance that the item will short circuit. If you make your skill roll by more than 10, it automatically shorts. On a critical success, the equipment catches fire!

If you are surging a device that has Invulnerability to, Reflection of, or Absorption of Electrical damage, each level subtracts 2 from your effective Power.

*Example:* You have Surge-13 and make a skill roll with a 10. Since you won by 3, there will be a 2 out of 6 chance for



the object to short out. You roll a die, trying for a 2 or less. You get a 2, and the device fizzes, pops, and smokes!

**VACUUM (AREA/PHYSICAL) LC: 4**

You can destroy the air in an area. This normally results in a loud thunderclap as air rushes in to fill the newly created space. In a closed environment such as a sealed airplane cabin or a space shuttle, this will leave nothing to breathe!

The thunderclap does 1d-2 damage to anyone inside the area who doesn't make a HT roll – a critical failure on this HT roll results in deafness for 1d hours.

**VIBRATORY BLAST (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 9**

You can project a bolt of vibratory energy that does 1d *impaling* damage per level of power to living targets. Crystalline objects (and most metals are crystalline unless specifically alloyed to be amorphous) can be shattered by vibration; treat it as an armor-piercing attack (p. 49) which bypasses 1/4 of the DR. One further level of armor piercing can be bought as an enhancement.

*Special Limitation:* No armor-piercing effects against metal and crystal. -20%.

**WALL OF FIRE (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 5**

You can create a wall of fire that stretches for Power hexes in length, and Power/3 hexes in height. All targeting through this wall is treated as if firing through a hex of Darkness (see p. B163). Anyone passing through the wall will take damage equal to half the normal Power of the creator of the wall.

Other appropriate special effects can be substituted; this would work just as well as a Wall of Blades or Wall of Stinging Flies.

**WARM (AREA/MENTAL) LC: 2**

You can raise the temperature in an area, up to a maximum of 10° per level of Power. Otherwise, this is treated as Control Temperature (p. 57).

**WATER CANNON (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 6**

You can hit your foes with a blast of water that does crushing damage. This can be dodged or blocked, but not parried except with a super-power. It will also short-circuit most electrical equipment, ruin papers, fill swimming pools (Power gallons per second), and so on.

**WATER JET (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 5**

This ability allows you to shoot a high-pressure jet of water at someone. Range is doubled; damage is doubled for knockback purposes, and halved for figuring crushing damage. The amount of water is the same as per Water Cannon.

*Example:* Power 5 gives you a 5d Water Jet. If you roll 18 on the damage, your target would take 9 points crushing damage and 36 points of knockback. He would be knocked back 4 hexes.

**WAVE OF EARTH (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 6**

You can cause a wall of earth to rise from the ground and smash down on a foe, doing 1d damage per level of Power. If invoked in an area that is not bare ground (a paved lot, etc.), the wave does damage to the covering material *first*, likely destroying it in the process.

**WHIRLWIND (AREA/PHYSICAL) LC: 5**

You can create a miniature tornado! If the radius of the storm is 2 hexes or greater, the center hex will be an "eye" of calm. This whirlwind will pick up objects weighing up to 30 lbs. per hex radius. Anyone caught in the wind must make a ST-5 roll to keep their feet (unless the wind is strong enough to lift their weight, in which case they don't get a roll!) and are at -5 on all DX based powers. Missiles, Jets, or other ranged attacks into or through the wind will only hit on a critical success.

This wind will also have other side effects – paper, leaves, and other light debris will be stirred up in an area equal to twice the radius of the storm, candles will be blown out, etc.

**WIND BLAST (RANGED/PHYSICAL) LC: 6**

This power creates a high pressure blast of air that hits its target with damaging force. The maximum range is 1 hex per point of damage. It may be dodged, but not blocked or parried.

**WIND JET (RANGED JET/PHYSICAL) LC: 5**

This is a variant of the Wind Blast power (above). Damage is doubled, but only does *knockback* damage to its target. It may be dodged, but not blocked or parried.

*Example:* One of Dr. Skull's agents is hit with a 44-point Wind Jet. He is knocked back 5 hexes but otherwise unhurt. However, he falls into a cement mixer . . .

REMARKABLE  
GADGETEERING

MECHANICAL MADNESS!

**W**ONDERFUL DEVICES PLAY A LARGE PART IN MANY COMIC-BOOK SCENARIOS. A HIGH-SCHOOL NERD STUMBLES ACROSS THE WRECK OF AN ALIEN SPACESHIP AND USES THE DEVICES WITHIN TO RIGHT WRONGS, OR A GENIUS INDUSTRIALIST BUILDS A SET OF POWERED ARMOR THAT TURNS HIM INTO A SUPER-CRIMEFIGHTER.

WITH THE RIGHT GADGETS, A "NORMAL" CAN BECOME, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, A SUPER.



## GADGETEERING: INVENTING NEW DEVICES

Characters in the comics often use equipment that is years ahead of its time technologically. So, in keeping with the genre, players may create a "gadgeteer" hero able to design and build high-tech weapons, tools, armor, etc. according to the rules that follow. For the *Supers* genre, these replace the "new inventions" rules on pp. B186-187 (see *Super Equipment*, p. 68). A gadgeteer builds technological equipment that the GM feels can be reasonably accomplished. Gadgets that have a super-skill or super-advantage as a power can be bought with character points, but not "gadgeteered," and don't require a scientific explanation.

A character must have the Gadgeteer advantage (p. 14) to create new equipment, but it isn't required if the player just wishes to purchase special gadgets, or even super-equipment, when creating his character – see the sidebar. This advantage reflects the character's aptitude in creating *new* equipment or modifying existing equipment. It doesn't just mean the hero is unusually smart or knowledgeable; it represents a broad, intuitive capacity for inventing.

Every gadget has a specific area of knowledge required to create it. The gadgeteer may wish to specialize in one or two areas to start, then expand his horizons as he progresses in experience. The GM will assign the prerequisite skills for each gadget.

### CREATING NEW EQUIPMENT

Creating new gear requires the super to have a good understanding of the field he is working in. For example, a character trying to invent a new type of weapon *must* have a high skill in Engineer (Weapon Type) in order to succeed. The level of expertise required should depend on the complexity of the device (which is decided by the GM):

- Simple gadget: requires skill 12-14
- Average gadget: requires skill 15-17
- Complex gadget: requires skill 18-20
- Amazing gadget: requires skill 21+



Players who want to create a *new* gadget must have an explanation for its operation, and must describe it to the GM in a logical manner. The GM is free to accept or reject the design depending on its feasibility. If the item violates any laws of nature or goes totally beyond known science, it has moved into the realm of super-equipment (p. 68), and is purchased as such.

### TIME REQUIRED

A simple gadget will only take 1d-2 (minimum 1) days to develop. Average complexity calls for 2d days, a complex gadget takes 1d months, and an amazing gadget takes 3d months. These times assume that the super works eight hours a day on the invention. If the gadgeteer works 16 hours a day, time is cut by 50%, but he must make a HT roll each morning or lose fatigue as if he only got a half-night of sleep (see sidebar, p. B134). Fatigue lost in this manner can't be regained without taking a break from the project, which will add 1d days to it! If the super has the Doesn't Sleep advantage, only 1 fatigue roll per week is necessary.

At the middle of the project, the super rolls against the skills the GM required for the particular gadget. A failed roll adds 50% to the time to complete the gadget. On a critical failure the gadget is destroyed – all work is lost and the development cost (below) must be paid over again. A critical success means that the item is finished immediately!

This skill roll is modified by the complexity of the gadget – no modification for simple; -2 for average; -4 for complex; -8 for amazing.



### GADGETS FOR NON-GADGETEERS

Many characters will just wish to *use* high-tech equipment – they couldn't care less how it was made, as long as it works. Mere use of these gadgets doesn't require the Gadgeteering advantage – just money or character points.

It is up to the GM to decide whether the desired gadget has already been invented. If not, the PC must fund a gadgeteer and commission him to invent the thing, paying the development cost (see p. 68) and waiting the required time for results. Then figure the production cost as per p. 68, and charge the character 150% of that amount.

On the other hand, if the device has already been invented and is in production, it need not be developed. If the PC can find the source, he can buy the item at 150% of the production cost.

If the PC can't afford the cost, and doesn't have (or want) a patron who will pay for his equipment, he may spend character points to get money – 1 character point equals one month's salary at his regular job, or (if he has no job) at the best job he is qualified for.

## LOANING OR SELLING GADGETS

If a gadgeteer character is a member of the party, there will be times when the other characters want to use his devices.

Realistically, unless a given device requires special knowledge, anybody should be able to use it. Body armor, recoilless weapons, gas grenades, and so on are simple to use. But in terms of game balance, one gadgeteer should not be able to outfit the whole party with super-devices.

In general, the GM should restrict the use of gadgets to their creators except in unusual circumstances. Non-gadgeteers should be unwilling to place their faith in unfamiliar devices.

Alternatively, if a gadgeteer's friends want to use some of his devices, they can pay character points for the privilege. They do not have to be gadgeteers themselves; they would buy the devices as per the sidebar on p. 67, paying points for Unusual Background and money for the gadgets. In this case, the Unusual Background is "Has gadgeteer friend"!



## EXPENSES

Creating new gadgets is very costly. Tools, raw material, unusual parts, laboratory space, etc., all require money. The GM will assign two costs to an item – *Development* cost, which must be paid before any item can be fabricated, and *Production* cost, which must be paid for *each* item created.

Development cost is a function of tech level and complexity of an item. The following table shows the *Base Cost* for an item at the campaign tech level, and the *TL Increment*, the cost for each additional tech level above the campaign.

### GADGET DEVELOPMENT COST

Complexity	Base Cost	TL Increment
Simple	\$50,000	\$100,000
Average	\$100,000	\$250,000
Complex	\$250,000	\$500,000
Amazing	\$500,000	\$1,000,000

Production cost varies from item to item. If the gadget exists in *GURPS Space* or the *GURPS Basic Set*, use the cost of the item as a base production cost and double it for each difference in tech level, *accumulating* the cost!

*Example:* Gadget Master wishes to make a Holodistort Belt (p. S47). This is a TL10 item that uses a holographic projector to distort the appearance of the wearer, giving the wearer some small bonuses in combat and making him almost impossible to see.

The GM rules that this is a complex item, so the base development cost is \$250,000. Since TL10 is 3 tech levels above the campaign TL7, there is an additional \$1,500,000 (3×TL Increment) development cost, bringing the total to \$1,750,000.

This item sells for \$4,000 at TL10. The difference of three Tech Levels causes the price to double 3 times; \$4,000 + \$8,000 + \$16,000 + \$32,000 = \$60,000 per item!

## GADGETEERING DURING ADVENTURES

At least as important as the ability to build gadgets is the ability to modify and analyze equipment during the course of an adventure. The skill roll required to successfully figure out an item is the same as the roll that would be required to create it.

To modify someone else's gadget requires 1d hours, and two such successful skill rolls! The GM will have to use his judgment to decide what modifications could reasonably be made in each particular case.

## SUPER EQUIPMENT

The second class of equipment covers things that are not available at *any* reasonable tech level – Wristbands of Bullet Deflection, Amulets of Weather Control, and other items that enable anyone bearing them to use a super-ability. This could be either an Advantage or a Power/Skill combination.

Gadgets of this nature are usually purchased strictly with character points, as many items will be unique, while others will be beyond the pocketbook of even the filthy rich. When the campaign requires it (e.g., for the IST battlesuits described on p. 98), the GM may set a cash cost for super-items, but in general that cost should not be assessed to player characters. In other words, if IST battlesuits are mass-produced, they must have a price, but most PCs will acquire them by going to work for the IST and taking the U.N. as a Patron.

Begin by figuring the point cost of each Advantage and Power/Skill that the gadget possesses. Skill costs are computed as if the skills were being

bought by a super with DX 12 for physical skills and IQ 12 for mental skills. The final skill level for each ability the gadget possesses must be at least 16.

*Example:* It would normally cost 84 points for someone with DX 12 to purchase Fireball-16(10), so 84 points would be the base cost for a ring that gave someone this ability.

### DISADVANTAGES AND SUPER-DISADVANTAGES

Disadvantages can be purchased in exactly the same way. The value of the disadvantage is subtracted from the total point value of the gadget. It is possible for a gadget to have a zero or even a negative value!

### GADGET LIMITATIONS

It is assumed that gadgets are not unique; that is, they can be replaced. They are unbreakable, and cannot be taken from the owner against his will unless he is helpless. However, limitations can be taken to make the gadget more vulnerable but less costly in points! After the base cost of the gadget has been determined, the cost may be modified as follows (maximum modifier, -75%).

#### BREAKABLE

**-5% OR -15%**

Enough damage will destroy this item. If it is destroyed, it is lost. If it is partially damaged, it can be repaired unless the creator defines it as unrepairable.

The GM should create a list of skills that are required to repair a gadget. A critical failure on a skill roll by the repairer should be messy – a random power might stop working, or might affect the mechanic.

If its DR is 15 or less *and* it has 75 or fewer hit points, this is worth -15%.

If DR is over 15, or hit points are over 75, it is only worth -5%.

If the item cannot be repaired at all, this is worth an additional -15%.

The GM will have to assign PD and DR to objects as he sees fit. See p. B125 for information on PD and DR for inanimate objects.

#### CAN BE HIT

**VARIES**

The item is easily seen and recognized, and could be targeted in combat. Hit modifiers are determined by the item's size. An unbreakable item *cannot* take this modifier. An item that only has a -5% Breakable modifier only gets  $\frac{1}{4}$  this cost reduction.

No penalty to hit: -25%

-6 to hit: -10%

-2 to hit: -20%

-8 to hit: -5%

-4 to hit: -15%

-10 or more to hit: no bonus

#### CAN BE STOLEN

**VARIES**

This item is not Unremovable. It must be carried or worn in such a way that it could be taken away from the wearer in close combat, by a TK "grab," and so on. Value of this limitation depends on the difficulty of stealing the item:

Easily snatched with a DX roll (e.g., a hat): -40%

Requires thief to win Context of DX with wearer (e.g., a bracelet): -30%

Requires thief to win Context of ST with wearer (e.g., a handgun): -20%

Can only be taken by stealth or trickery (e.g., a coin in a pocket): -10%

Halve any of the above limitations if the object is not obviously powerful, and might be overlooked or misunderstood by a foe.

Halve any of the above limitations if the object would not immediately work for the person who took it.

#### FIXED LOCATION

**-50%**

This item is permanently fixed in one spot (and that spot is not movable!) – this is mainly for designing strongholds or building security.



### GMING GADGETS

At first glance, it may seem as if every player in the campaign will want to use Super Equipment to get their powers at a reduced cost. But there are many disadvantages to depending on equipment.

Once the villains realize how powerful the item is, there will be constant attempts to steal it, or failing that, to destroy it. The government (if it isn't synonymous with the villains!) will also want to get its hands on the item so that "top men" can analyze it.

Maintenance and repair of items that can break should be costly – parts may be hard to find, or very expensive.

None of this is "picking on" a character that has a lot of equipment – it's just the way things work!

## SUPER EQUIPMENT EXAMPLES

### RING

You have a ring that has Fireball-16(10). It's an heirloom from a mysterious aunt, and is the only one of its kind (-25%). You decide that it can be broken. The GM assigns a DR 2, HP 5, and it cannot be repaired if damaged (-30%). Since you're going to be wearing it on a finger, it "Can Be Hit" at -6 on hit rolls (-10%), for a total discount of 65%. You'd now spend 30 points (35% of 84 = 29.4, round up) and have a Fireball ring!

*Continued on next page . . .*



### UNIQUE

**-25%**

Once this item is gone, that's it. There are no more. Character points spent for the item are simply lost if it is broken or stolen.

### UNRELIABLE

**VARIABLE**

You must roll in order to activate the power or advantage contained in the gadget. Should the activation roll fail, another attempt may be made each second, at a cumulative -1 for each failed attempt! Waiting one minute will restore the device to its normal activation roll.

If a skill roll is normally required to hit with this power, a separate "to hit" roll is required after activation!

Activation roll of 15+: no bonus

Activation roll of 13: -5%

Activation roll of 11: -10%

Activation roll of 9: -15%

Activation roll of 8: -20%

### UNREMOVABLE

**+10% OR -10%**

The gadget cannot be taken away without killing the user. Point value is a GM judgment call. If the GM agrees that wearing the device constantly could be a disadvantage, it is worth -10%. Otherwise, it is +10%!

### VEHICULAR

**-25%**

This gadget is permanently attached to some sort of *transportation* vehicle (car, motorcycle, plane, ultralight, spaceship, boat, etc.). For something to qualify as a vehicle, it must *not* be with the character most or all of the time. Specifically, powered armor, wheelchair, skateboard, surfboard, roller skates, jet pack, or anything else that falls into the realm of personal equipment rather than vehicle is excluded.

## LOST AND FOUND GADGETS

There will be times throughout a continuing campaign when characters lose their equipment either to damage or to outright theft. They will also run across powerful items that they will wish to claim as their own. Handling these situations requires a delicate touch by the GM to prevent imbalance.

What follows is the *suggested* method of handling lost and found items. There are several other schools of thought; see below for alternate ideas.

### LOST IS LOST

If you lose a replaceable item, you don't have much of a problem. The GM will define what it takes to get a new one, you follow through, and within a few days (or possibly weeks) you have a new one.

Losing an irreplaceable object is much more serious. If your 250-point character loses his 96-point Magic Beanie, he is now a 154-point character. There is no compensation, and you don't get to spend the 96 points you lost to bring you back to 250 points. This may seem harsh, but it is one of the hazards of relying on gadgets and equipment.



## FOUND IS FOUND

On the brighter side, there is no point cost for found equipment. If you defeat Professor Q and steal his Psychomorphic Actuator that cost him 212 character points, it is considered "spoils of war," and costs you nothing.

Just because you've found a gadget does not mean that you know how to use it. The GM should have fun with malfunctioning, misdirected, and misunderstood powers while you experiment with your new toy! And, of course, your hero can lose the gadget just as easily as he found it. For instance, the Professor may have had a henchman who knew about the Actuator and wants to get his hands on it, or the government may take a direct interest in it.

## LOST AND FOUND GADGETS: OPTIONAL RULES

There are several other ways that the GM can handle lost and found gadgets in order to balance the campaign to his personal satisfaction:

### PAYING POINTS FOR FOUND GADGETS

If a gadget is found (or, more likely, captured from a foe), the PC may use it, if at all, only until the end of the game session or the adventure. After that, he must either give it up immediately or pay the appropriate character points to own it. If he does not have enough points to "buy" the device, he may keep it "for study," but he may not use it until he earns enough character points to buy it.

### RECOVERING POINTS FOR LOST GADGETS

A GM who thinks that "lost is lost" is too harsh may contrive to return or replace any lost device that was bought with character points. Alternatively, the points may be returned to the character as "unspent points" which can then be used to purchase other advantages.

### TEAM PROPERTY

Very powerful gadgets (e.g., vehicles) may be kept as the property of a super-team, without being owned by any one member. Super-weapons could be kept in the team museum, to be used only in emergencies (probably with a high probability of failure or backfire, since such devices would be poorly understood).

## QUICK GADGETEERING

Some GMs will not be satisfied with the current gadgeteering time and costs. Rather than spending days of work and hundreds of thousands of dollars, they wish to run PCs who can throw together a Interphazed Fromblitzer in less than an hour, using only the contents of a random glove compartment. This "quick" gadgeteering is best suited for a highly cinematic campaign.

The GM should increase the cost of the Gadgeteering advantage (p. 14) to 50 points if he is going to use these guidelines.

### NECESSARY SKILLS

Skills are chosen by the GM as per normal gadgeteering, p. 67.

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

The cinematic gadgeteer is a master at cannibalizing parts and scrounging bits and pieces from other equipment. The GM should allow a roll versus an appropriate specialty to locate usable components. For example, if the only thing available is a wrecked '65 Mustang, the GM might require a roll versus Mechanical Engineering or Mechanic to find the parts necessary for the gadget under construction.

## SUPER EQUIPMENT EXAMPLES (CONTINUED)

### BATTLESUIT

You want a suit of powered armor with the following abilities: Armor-piercing, computer-controlled laser guns; gives the user ST 40; flies at at least 150 mph, PD 6 (the maximum allowed) and DR 20 from armor plating; total invulnerability to cutting and impaling damage; full life support; vision enhancers for any lighting; full two-way radio; and self-repairing.

Start by considering how much of this could be acquired with "mere money." You could start with TL7 Light Body Armor, with PD 4, DR 15. (This is as described in *GURPS Space*; you could start with any armor appropriate to your standard technology.) Two-way radios are standard technology. The total cost of this would only be a few hundred dollars; depending on the character's origin story, the GM would be justified in ignoring this cost. None of the other powers desired can be acquired off the shelf.

So, you buy several advantages. Enhanced ST of 40 costs 180 points, 2 points of PD costs 50 points, 5 points of DR costs 15 points, Dark Vision costs 25 points, Invulnerability to Cutting/Impaling damage costs 150 points, Pressure Support costs 15 points, and Doesn't Breathe costs 20 points. Flight cost 40 points for a base Move of 10 - 3 levels of Super Flight costs 60 points and increases the flying speed to 163 mph. Fast Regeneration costs 50 points (this doesn't repair the user, just the suit!) and will repair 1 HP per minute.

This just leaves the lasers. You buy the Laser skill as a generic attack skill-16(8). Skill 16 costs 24 points; Power 8 has a base cost of 48, then adds the Impaling +40%, Rapid Fire +40%, Armor Piercing +50%, and Homing×2 +100% enhancements, for a total of 159 points (158.4 points, rounded up). This now gives you a 2-shot per turn laser that does 8d Armor Piercing damage, and needs no roll to hit, for a total cost of 183 points (159 + 24).

Total cost is a base 788 points. The suit is unique (-25%), and it is slightly breakable; DR 20, HP 100 (-5%). Finally, it can be hit in combat with no subtraction on the "to hit" roll (-25%), for a total modifier of -55%. This brings the cost down to 355 points!

## THE TALISMAN OF ZARD'D

This mystic amulet gives its wearer the power to change into a demonic killing machine. Unfortunately, the amulet, once put on, can't be removed until death, and the wearer can't always control when he transforms!

The amulet can be worn under clothing. When the wearer transforms, the amulet becomes a glowing jewel set between the demon's eyes. It cannot be destroyed by any force known to man.

The Uncontrolled Transformation is worth a base -10 points – but the demon has a reaction modifier of -6, which adds another -60 points. Total value for the Uncontrolled Change is -70 points.

The demon has two extra arms (20 points) with Full Coordination (50 points). It is incredibly tough, with a DR of 100 (300 points). It has IQ 10 (no points), DX 14 (45 points), HT 14 (45 points), and ST 14 (45 points). It retains the memories and skills of the original person; all skills will be at an appropriate bonus or penalty if the original IQ and DX weren't 10 and 14.

The base cost for the item is 405 points. Unique (-25%) and Unremovable (-10%) total -35%. Final cost is 264 points.



This roll should be modified as follows:

Simple Gadget: no modifier

Average Gadget: specialty-2

Complex Gadget: specialty-6

Amazing Gadget: specialty-10

### TIME REQUIRED

A simple gadget will only take 2d minutes to assemble from the needed components. Average complexity calls for 1d-2 hours (a roll of 1 or 2 indicates a 30 minute assembly time). A complex gadget requires 1d hours to assemble, and an amazing gadget will take 4d hours.

The super doesn't roll against the required skills until the *end* of the project. A failed roll indicates that the PC must start over. A critical failure means that the parts were ruined – new ones must be found before construction can resume.

### EXPENSES

If the inventor can scrounge the necessary parts, costs are minimal (1d-1×\$100, a roll of 1 indicates no cost). If he must *buy* the needed items, the cost is figured as normal (see p. 68), then divided by 100.

### QUICK GADGETEERING DURING ADVENTURES

Figuring out someone else's devices requires 1d *minutes* using these rules, and the device can be modified in 1d×10 minutes (plus normal skill rolls, as per p. 67).

## OPTIONAL RULE: "GIZMO" GADGETS

Many supers always seem to have the right piece of gear at the right time ("Good thing I had that Mace on the utility belt, Ratboy, or those sorority girls might have mussed my costume!"). To emulate this in *Supers*, the GM may allow a gadgeteer to use a *gizmo* during his adventures. This may be *any* device the PC *could* have reasonably been carrying. It remains undefined until he uses it.

*Example:* Dr. Impresto, the stage magician/crimefighter, has room in his opera cloak for seven items. He normally carries a small pistol, lockpicks, two stun grenades, two smoke bombs, and a gizmo (an undefined gadget). During an adventure, the good Doctor is overpowered, handcuffed, and hung in a walk-in meat locker to freeze or suffocate. He easily escapes the handcuffs, but the door is deadbolted. Dr. Impresto tells the GM that his gizmo is a vial of thermite paste, which burns the hinges off the freezer door.

Only gadgeteers are allowed to use gizmos, even if other PCs are allowed to use regular gadgets.

### POINT COSTS

The number of gizmos a character can use *per game session* is determined as part of the cost for the Gadgeteer advantage. Each gizmo adds 5 points to the cost, up to a maximum of three gizmos (15 points).

*Example:* A normal gadgeteer (25 points) wishes to be able to carry two gizmos per game session (10 points), for a total cost of 35 points. A quick gadgeteer (see p. 71) would pay 60 points for the same privilege.

### LIMITATIONS

The gizmo must be a mundane device or one that the gadgeteer has already developed and built. Obviously it must fit the space that the gadgeteer had available – no autogyros in coat pockets. Essentially, if the gadgeteer has built 20 different devices that would fit in his coat pocket, he may reach into the pocket and produce any of them as a gizmo.

# UNNATURAL MULTIPLE LIMBS

## FROM ANOTHER WORLD



**C**OMICS ARE FULL OF MULTI-LIMBED CREATURES – MONSTERS, ALIENS, AND RUN-OF-THE-MILL MUTANTS. EXTRA LIMBS, OR LIMBS WITH UNUSUAL ABILITIES, ARE TREATED AS ADVANTAGES.

**NOTE:** THESE RULES ARE TAKEN DIRECTLY OUT OF *GURPS FANTASY FOLK*. IF THE GM OR PLAYER IS DESIGNING A NEW RACE FROM SCRATCH (AS OPPOSED TO A SUPER WHO HAPPENS TO HAVE EXTRA ARMS), HE SHOULD REFER TO EITHER *FANTASY FOLK* OR *GURPS ALIENS*. ANY PLACE THAT THE TWO BOOKS CONFLICT, ASSUME THAT *FANTASY FOLK* IS CORRECT.

## BODY DESIGN

The creator of a nonhuman or altered-human character determines its body shape. The GM should not allow any "free" advantages based on body shape unless they are trivial or obvious. For instance, a giant centipede could certainly travel at full speed through a four-foot-tall tunnel. But the GM does not have to let the player say "I'm a bug, so I can walk up buildings!" The Clinging advantage would have to be bought.

### HIT LOCATION

It is up to the GM to determine hit locations on weirdly-shaped creatures, in any way he thinks fair and playable.

### ARRANGEMENT OF ARMS

A being with multiple arms can have them arranged in several ways:

*Symmetrically:* Two or more rights, one above the other; two or more lefts, one above the other. Any right arm can be used with any left arm on a "two-handed" task. All the arms can cooperate on a task like lifting a car or playing a four-handed sonata.

*Radially:* Any hand can be a "right" if used with the one on its left, or a "left" if used with the one on its right. But there are very few tasks on which more than two (or three hands, at the most) can be used at once. (If the arms were flexible, they could all cooperate on anything.) Creatures with a radial body design almost always have 360-degree vision!

*Separate sets:* A large creature might have more than one set of hands, far apart on its body. The hands of one set could not work with the hands of the other set unless the arms were very long!

*Peculiarly:* If the GM allows another layout of hands, he will have to answer any questions about what those hands can or cannot do.

## WINGS

Wings may be added to the design of a flying creature at no cost, unless they can also strike a blow. In that case, they are considered strikers (see main text), and cost the normal amount for a striker. Note that a flying character does not have to have wings; the creator can define any means of flight that seems appropriate; Winged Flight does, however, act as a -25% limitation to the Flight Power.

## INCREASING BASE MOVE

An alien might have a naturally faster or slower running speed, totally unrelated to the number of legs it has. This is bought as Increased Speed (p. 41) and costs 25 points per extra 1 Speed, Move, and Dodge.



## ARMS

If a limb can be used to manipulate, it's an arm, regardless of where it grows or what it looks like. Any normal arm can be used to strike a blow which does (thrust-2) damage based on ST. To do extra damage with an arm, see *Strikers* (p. 76). Characters have two arms at no cost. Extra arms have a base cost of 10 points each.

### COORDINATION

Extra arms allow extra actions. A three-handed creature could perform a two-handed task (e.g., firing a crossbow) and a one-handed task (e.g., swinging a sword) at the same time. He could not *aim* two weapons unless he has Independently Focusable Eyes (see p. 41).

A creature with multiple arms can use all of them in concert during normal situations (to repair a watch, for example), or during instinctive actions such as grappling in close combat or catching a thrown object. The ability to make multiple combat actions of other kinds is paid for separately, however (see the *Full Coordination* advantage, p. 40).

### MODIFIED STRENGTH

Any race may "buy" extra strength (relative to normal body strength) for some or all of its arms. This ST applies only to efforts to lift, throw, punch, or use weapons. Arm ST is bought up (or down) as follows:

For one arm: 30% of cost for overall body strength.  
For a set of two arms: 50% of cost for overall body strength.

This is additive.

*Example:* All Huks have four arms (20 points). Purple Huks have two arms with 2 points of extra ST; this costs them 50% of the normal cost for +2 ST, or 50% of 20 points, or an extra 10 points. Blue Huks have three strong arms; this costs them 80% of 20, or 16 points. Green Huks have four strong arms; this costs them 100% of 20, or 20 points.

### MODIFIED DEXTERITY

A race may purchase extra DX (relative to normal DX) for some or all of its arms. This DX applies to anything done with that arm or hand. If a task requires more than one hand, and they don't have the same DX, use the lower DX. Arm DX is bought up (or down) as follows:

For one arm: 60% of cost for overall body DX.

For a set of two arms: 80% of cost for overall body DX.

If a race is to have more than two arms, all with high DX, the race must buy the appropriate high DX for the whole creature.

### EXTRA FLEXIBILITY

Arms may be designed for great flexibility, compared to human arms. They may be tentacles, or they may just be multi-jointed. Such arms are not necessarily strong or weak; they are not necessarily either dexterous or clumsy. Those abilities and disabilities are bought separately.

The effect of this is simply that any arms that can reach each other can work together, regardless of body positioning, general layout, or "right" and "left."

Cost is 10 points (for the whole creature), or 5 points (for a single limb, for example an elephant's trunk).

### CONSTRICTION ATTACKS

A race with Extra Flexibility may also take a constriction attack for 15 points. In order to make a constriction attack the individual must first successfully grapple its opponent. Then roll a quick contest of ST. If the constrictor wins, the victim takes as much damage as he lost by. If the victim wins, he takes no damage.

To constrict successfully, the constricting limb must be twice as long in hexes as the victim's size in hexes. So to constrict a human (size 1 hex) the constricting limb must be at least 2 hexes long.

### LONGER OR SHORTER ARMS

Arms may be made longer or shorter, relative to human arms. For game purposes, human arms have a reach of 1. When ancient/medieval weapons are used, subtract 1 from any weapon's reach if it is held by short arms, and add 1 or more to the reach of a weapon held by longer arms.

Shorter arms cost only 5 points per additional arm. These arms have reach 0 (close combat only), and don't have the leverage to use any weapon which must be swung. If *all* of a race's arms are short, it is -2 on any attempt to grapple. If a two-armed race has two short arms, they are a -10 point disadvantage!

Longer arms cost +10 per arm for each extra hex of reach. Each extra hex of reach also adds +1 to the creature's *normal* swing damage, and +2 to any attempt to grapple. Note that long arms can be attacked in other hexes, as though they were long weapons (see p. B110).

## DILTON THE HUK

600 POINTS

ST 27 [160]; DX 15 [60]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 14/17 [60]  
Speed: 7.25; Move: 7.  
Dodge: 8.  
Damage: *Thrust* 3d-1; *Swing* 5d+1;  
*Axe* 5d+4.

### ADVANTAGES

Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10].

### DISADVANTAGES

Appearance: Hideous [-20]; Bad Temper [-10]; Bully [-10]; Gigantism [-10]; Intolerance of non-Huks [-10]; Laziness [-10]; Overconfidence [-10]; Sense of Duty to Current Employer [-5]; Stuttering [-10]; Truthfulness [-5].

### SUPER ADVANTAGES

360° Vision [25]; Chameleon × 5 [35]; Damage Resistance +18 [54]; Extra Arms × 2 [20]; Full Coordination/3 [150]; Independently Focusable Eyes × 3 [45]; Silence +3 [15]; Super Climb +5 [15].

### NON-SUPER EQUIPMENT

IMI Eagle .44 M; Military Blaster; two large axes (as *Basic Set* great axes, but Dilton can use one in each hand).

### SKILLS

Acrobatics [2]-14; Axe-Mace [4]-16; Beam Weapons [1]-17; Brawling [2]-16; Camouflage [1]-12; Climbing [4]-16; Fast Draw (guns) [1]-16; Guns [1]-17; Scrounging [1]-12; Stealth [2]-15; Throwing [2]-14.

### QUIRKS

Hates being lied to; Hates loud music; Hates small animals; Hates riding in cars; Loves being teased about his name (it gives him an excuse). [-5]

*Continued on next page . . .*



## DILTON THE HUK (CONTINUED)

Dilton was born on a planet in a remote galaxy, where everyone has four arms and eyes and stands 9 feet tall. Other than that, Huks are mostly humanoid.

Dilton (a green Huk) was an up-and-coming young space pirate until a bizarre stardrive accident blew his ship into a remote backwater galaxy. Dilton out-gunned his captain for the last functional rescue pod, and made his escape shortly before the ship blew up. The pod put him in suspended animation, awakening him only after it landed in a Nebraska cornfield. Dilton spent several months haunting the area farmsteads, creating an enduring legend of the "Corn Monster." Soon, however, he learned to ride the rails and began moving from city to city, gradually assimilating Earth language and culture.

Eventually Dilton was tracked down by the Exchange, who helped him set up as a metahuman mercenary thug.

Dilton's tactics are simple. He uses his Chameleon and Silence to get right in the middle of his enemies, then he erupts into a whirlwind of destruction. He usually carries two heavy axes (equivalent to the *Basic Set's* Great Axe, though Dilton can use it one-handed to full effect) and two firearms. With the aid of the Exchange he managed to procure a government prototype blaster, and he also habitually carries a .44 magnum (he's saving up for an Uzi).

Dilton's culture, though not at all "honorable" by human standards, never evolved the concept of the lie. Dilton has learned to recognize deliberate falsehood (it enrages him) but is incapable of telling a lie himself. His alien palate has difficulty with human language, leaving him with a marked speech impediment. As the only Huk in our galaxy, Dilton gets none of the unique racial advantages or point breaks from *GURPS Aliens*. As a fairly experienced super, Dilton totals 600 points.

## CONCEALED WEAPONS

There is no extra cost for a "hidden" arm, striker, and so on. If the organism is defined as having, for instance, cutting strikers in the form of chitinous blades that pop out of the sides of its head, that costs only the normal value for cutting strikers.

## NO PHYSICAL ATTACK

If the arm can manipulate but cannot attack physically (due to structure or lack of ST in that limb) each such arm only costs 5 points. Generally that limb can be used to wield a firearm or similar ranged attack, but cannot attack physically. An example of such a limb might be a monkey's prehensile tail. If these arms are also *short* (see above), the cost is only 2 points per arm.

## LEGS

If a limb cannot manipulate, but can be walked on, it is a leg. The "default" number of legs is two. A leg is assumed to be able to kick with a range of 1, doing thrust/crushing damage. Each additional hex of range costs 10 points. Extra damage is purchased per *Strikers*, below. If the legs can't kick for damage, reduce the total leg cost by 5 points.

Three or four legs cost 5 points; if the individual loses a leg, it can continue to move at half speed (round down). Loss of a second leg causes it to fall.

Cost to have five or six legs is 10 points. Each leg lost reduces speed by 2 until only three legs are left. At that point, speed is only 2. Loss of 1 more leg causes the individual to fall.

Cost to have seven or more legs is 15 points. Each leg lost reduces speed by 1 until only three legs are left. At that point, speed is only 2. Loss of one more leg causes the individual to fall.

## FEET MANIPULATORS

Any limb which can manipulate should be purchased as a short Extra Arm (5 points, see p. 75) with Nuisance Effect: Temporary Disadvantage (Legless while using Extra Arms, -35%), for 4 points. This means that if a person with feet manipulators is using his feet as arms, he can't walk or run; he can sit still, float (in space or liquid), or fly, of course.

## STRIKERS

If a limb can strike an aimed blow (rolling vs. DX) but cannot manipulate or be used for walking (a tail, for example), it is a "striker." Strikers cost 5 points apiece. Unmodified strikers do thrust/crushing damage, in close combat only (e.g. horns). Increased range costs 5 points per striker per hex.

## INCREASING DAMAGE: THE CLAWS ADVANTAGE

To increase the damage done by a striker, arm, or leg, the Claws advantage may be added. This may also represent fangs, pincers, horns, etc. For +15 points, the limb does an extra +2 damage: punch+2 for arms, kick+2 for legs, and thrust+2 for strikers. For +40 points, *talons* let the limb do both swing/cutting and thrust/impaling damage. For +55 points, *long talons* do swing+2/cutting and thrust+2/impaling. Note that this advantage only has to be purchased *once* - no matter how many limbs it modifies! If a race has eight arms, 15 points will buy +2 damage for all the arms (of course, Full Coordination, p. 40, is needed to attack with more than one at a time).

## AIMING STRIKERS

Some strikers (e.g., tails) cannot be aimed well. If a striker attacks at a penalty to DX, subtract a point from its cost for every -1 to DX.

# WONDROUS SUPER COMBAT

## AND DEATH-DEFYING FEATS



**C**OMICS AND COMBAT GO TOGETHER LIKE BACON AND EGGS; IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER. THE CINEMATIC, OFTEN BLOODLESS STYLE OF FOUR-COLOR COMBAT IS SOMETIMES AT ODDS WITH THE REALISTIC *GURPS* COMBAT SYSTEM. TO SIMULATE "COMIC REALISM," THE FOLLOWING RULES ARE OFFERED AS OPTIONS. THE GM DECIDES BEFOREHAND WHICH (IF ANY) APPLY. IF YOU ARE THE GM, BE SURE TO LET THE PLAYERS KNOW ALL THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THEM!

## OPTIONAL RULE: MULTIPLE ACTIONS

This rule lets very fast characters take more actions, as well as moving faster.

For every *full* 6 points of Move, you can take one maneuver per turn, minimum of one. This does *not* speed up concentration! If a skill requires a turn of concentration, that means one *full* turn. This *will* allow someone with a Move of 12 to Step and Ready, then Step and Attack in the same turn. One additional parry and block is added per maneuver after the first.

Super Running, Super Flight, and Super Swimming do *not* count toward determining this number! Only count basic Move, modified by encumbrance.

## CHOKING

To choke a foe, you must have already grappled him around the neck with two hands, and you can't do anything else with these hands this turn.

Roll a Quick Contest – your ST versus his ST or HT (whichever is greater). If you lose, nothing happens. If you win, your opponent takes 1 point of damage for each point you beat him by (e.g., you beat your ST by 15, he beat his by 8, so he takes 7 points damage) plus suffocation damage as per p. B122.

## MOVEMENT

Comics combat is fast and furious – though there's always time to deliver a soliloquy as you throw a punch. Because of the high Move rates of super-combat, it is recommended that combat be resolved in order of Move rather than on an initiative die (p. B95). While this introduces a little more bookkeeping, it is more fair to characters who have high Speeds.

### STEP MANEUVERS

In ordinary combat, the *Step* portion of a *Step and (anything)* maneuver is a 1-hex move. This reduces the effectiveness of high speed, as a character can only take a small portion of his Move without losing his active defenses.

This is perfectly acceptable for characters with low Moves, but someone with Move 15 should be able to cover more ground while drawing a pistol than someone with Move 5.

To reflect this, for every 4 *full* points of Move, Step is increased by 1, with a minimum value of 1. A character with Move 0 to 7 will have a Step of 1; Move 8 to 11 has a Step of 2, Move 12 to 15 has a Step of 3, and so on. This will allow someone with Step 3 to move 3 hexes and still ready a weapon using the *Step and Ready* maneuver.

Multiple-hex Steps may be broken up in a turn (e.g., a person with Step 2 could move 1 hex, fire a weapon, then move 1 more hex.)

### MOVEMENT AND ENCUMBRANCE

To more accurately reflect the effects of encumbrance on *very fast* movement, use the following system to figure Move based on weight carried.

For Moves of 9 or less, use the standard system from the *GURPS Basic Set*. For moves of 10 or greater:

Encumbrance	Move
Light	Move $\times$ 0.8, round down, never lower than 8
Medium	Move $\times$ 0.6, round down, never lower than 7
Heavy	Move $\times$ 0.4, round down, never lower than 6
X-Heavy	Move $\times$ 0.2, round down, never lower than 5

## SUPER-STRENGTH

The following table shows the basic damage done for Strengths above 20.





ST	Thrust	Swing
21	2d	4d-1
22	2d	4d
23	2d+1	4d+1
24	2d+1	4d+2
25	2d+2	5d-1
26	2d+2	5d
27	3d-1	5d+1
28	3d-1	5d+1
29	3d	5d+2
30	3d	5d+2
31	3d+1	6d-1
32	3d+1	6d-1
33	3d+2	6d
34	3d+2	6d
35	4d-1	6d+1
36	4d-1	6d+1
37	4d	6d+2
38	4d	6d+2
39	4d+1	7d-1
40	4d+1	7d-1

## SUPER SLAMS

The slam rules in the *GURPS Basic Set* do not reflect the "reality" of high-ST comic combat. With some slight modifications, though, you can slam your foes through walls with the best of them!

You can gauge how much damage you did to a person based on how far your attack knocked him backwards. For every hex you knock a foe back with a Slam attack, you inflict 1 point of damage.

## SUPER KNOCKBACK

How far an opponent is knocked backwards is affected by several factors. First you have to hit him. If you hit, consider the difference in ST, weight, and speed to determine who gets knocked back.

## HIT OR MISS

To hit your foe, roll a Quick Contest of DX. He is at a -2 if you entered from a side hex or he isn't standing; you automatically hit if you attacked from behind. Each of you adds a bonus to his DX based on his own speed. Use the Ranged Weapons Table from p. B201. Read this modifier from the *Size* column, not the *Speed/Range* column, as it is *added* to your DX rather than subtracted.

*Example:* You have DX 13 and are flying at 25 yards per turn to slam a purse snatcher with DX 11 who is sprinting at Move 8. You check the table and your Move of 25 is worth a +7 modifier (in the *Size* column), so your effective DX for purposes of the combat is 13+7=20.

You're coming in from the side, so his DX is reduced by 2 to 9. He is moving at 8, so he checks the table and finds he gets a +4 modifier, bringing his DX up to 13. You would now roll a Quick Contest of DX, 20 versus 13.

## KNOCKBACK DISTANCE

If you slam your opponent successfully, roll a Quick Contest of ST, with the following modifiers:

- +1 per 5 hexes of your current speed (round up).
- 1 per 5 hexes of your foe's current speed (round up).

ST	Thrust	Swing
45	5d	7d+1
50	5d+2	8d-1
55	6d	8d+1
60	7d-1	9d
65	7d+1	9d+2
70	8d	10d
75	8d+2	10d+2
80	9d	11d
85	9d+2	11d+2
90	10d	12d
95	10d+2	12d+2
100	11d	13d
110	12d	14d
120	13d	15d

and so on: +1d for each full 10 points of added ST.

## ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE

Absolutely basic to the *Supers* genre is the idea that a super-battle causes huge amounts of collateral destruction (if not death). A super-conflict is a very unhealthy thing for innocent bystanders . . . and cars, and buildings.

In a rural setting, super-battles are unlikely to do much damage. But many fights will take place downtown!

To simulate this, use the table below after each attack capable of damaging a target (e.g., not binding attacks, clouds of darkness, and so on). Roll once for each attack that misses its target, or is dodged or parried. Roll once at a -2 for each attack that is blocked, or that *hits* - after all, some damage will bounce.

Add 3 to any roll for an attack that was a critical failure.

## GENERAL DESTRUCTION (ROLL THREE DICE)

- 8 or less: No significant damage.
- 9: Minor damage (\$100).
- 10: Fairly minor damage (\$1,000).
- 11: Significant damage (\$10,000).
- 12: Major damage (\$100,000).
- 13: Huge damage (\$1,000,000).
- 14: Catastrophic damage (\$10,000,000).
- 15: Bystander injured seriously, and roll again.
- 16+: Bystander killed, and roll again.

Add 2 to the roll if the fight erupted without warning. Not only are bystanders more likely to be hit, but the heroes are more likely to destroy other property while trying to miss innocent victims!

Add 1 to the roll for each full 5 points of Power over 15. A Power of 20 gets +1, a Power of 25 gets +2, and so on.

Add 4 to the roll if the attack is *intended* to cause property damage as a collateral effect, or add 4 if the attacker ignores his foes and goes deliberately for bystanders and property. The GM may modify this last roll according to the situation. If the Blue Demon wades into a fleeing crowd and starts ripping, he won't just kill them one at a time . . .

The GM may determine the details of each destruction. \$100 might be a bystander knocked down and bruised; \$1,000, a car knocked off the road; \$5,000, a car smashed; \$100,000, a small building leveled.

## AVOIDING PROPERTY DAMAGE

A super who wishes to fight carefully may take a skill penalty on any attack. For each -1 he takes as a skill penalty (representing the hesitation with which he lines up an attack), he can take a -2 on the accidental damage roll for that attack.

## THROWING DISTANCE

Ratio	Distance Modifier
.100	3.5x
.125	3.0x
.200	2.5x
.300	1.9x
.400	1.5x
.500	1.2x
.750	1.0x
1.000	0.8x
1.500	0.7x
2.000	0.6x
2.500	0.5x
3.000	0.4x
4.000	0.3x
5.000	0.25x
6.000	0.2x
8.000	0.15x
10.000	0.1x
20.000+	.05x

**Example 1:** You have ST 14 and need to throw a 120-lb. body over a 6' pit. Divide  $120/14 = 8.571$ . Looking at the Ratio column, this rounds up to 10.000. The Distance Modifier is .1x.

$.1 \times 14 = 1.4$  yards. Oooops. The body just hit the bottom of the pit.

**Example 2:** You have ST 80 and want to throw a 50-lb. bag of cement at a foe.  $50/80 = .625$  which rounds up to .750. The multiplier is 1.0x, so you could throw the bag  $1.0 \times 80 = 80$  yards. Think.

## THROWING DAMAGE

Object Weight	Damage
Less than 2 lbs.	Thrust-2 per die
2 lbs. to 4 lbs.	Thrust-1 per die
5 lbs. to ST lbs.	Thrust
ST+1 to 3xST lbs.	Thrust+1 per die
3xST+1 to 7xST lbs.	Thrust
7xST+1 to 11xST lbs.	Thrust-1/2 per die
Over 11xST lbs.	Thrust-1 per die

**Example 1:** You hit your foe with that 50-lb. bag of cement thrown with your ST 80. It is between 5 lbs. and (your ST) lbs. As shown on the table above, it does straight Thrust damage. Now check the table on p. 79 (or refer to your character sheet!). Thrust damage for ST 80 is 9d damage, so you do 9 dice with the cement bag.

**Example 2:** You throw a 750-lb. motorcycle with your ST 80. On the table above, 750 lbs. is between 7 and 11 times your ST, so it does (Thrust-1/2 per die) damage. You would do 9d minus 4.5 damage with it, which rounds to 9d-4. The motorcycle actually does less damage than the bag of cement; it's too heavy for you to throw with your maximum effectiveness.

+2 if you have a medium or large shield (or equivalent object), -2 if your opponent has one.

+2 if you slammed him from behind.

+1 for every level of Increased Density or Bouncing you have.

-1 for every level of Increased Density or Bouncing the victim has.

The loser falls down, and may also be knocked *backwards*. For every 2 points the winner beats his ST roll by, the loser is knocked backwards 1 hex, and takes 1 point of damage.

If he hits a solid object, calculate how fast he's traveling and figure damage from the collision as outlined below. The collision damage is *in addition to* the full knockback damage.

The winner will also fall down if he fails to make a roll versus his adjusted ST. In any event, the winner takes 1/2 point of damage per hex of knockback he inflicted on his opponent.

**Example:** Using the above example, let's assume that you had 2 levels of Increased Density. You are ST 30; the purse snatcher is ST 12. Your modifiers are: +5 for your Move 25, -2 for his Move 8, +2 for your Increased Density. You roll against 35; the mugger rolls versus 12. You each roll a 10, so he beat his by 2 and you beat yours by 25. The mugger lost the contest by a  $25-2=23$  point margin, so he flies  $23/2 = 11$  hexes. You immediately take 5 points damage (1/2 of 11), which might not penetrate your DR.

Unfortunately for the purse snatcher, there is a brick wall 4 hexes away. He was knocked back 11 hexes, and 11 hexes per turn equals 25 mph. He takes 11 points from the knockback, plus 5d damage from the collision. You roll 19 on the five dice, so the mugger takes a total of 30 points damage. The wall had DR 10 and HT 30, so the 19 points of damage didn't break the wall. The mugger probably drops the purse.

## COLLISIONS

If you hit an immovable object such as the ground, or any object of at least five times your own weight, you haven't done a Slam attack - you've had a collision. How much damage you do (and take) depends on how fast you were moving. For every 5 mph (round down) you are moving, you take 1d damage from a collision, and inflict the same amount on whatever you hit. If the object breaks from the impact, damage you take is halved, and your speed is halved.

## THROWING

The rules for throwing objects presented on p. B90 do not allow for super-high ST. The following system bases the distance you can throw an object and the damage that it does upon the relationship between your ST and the object's weight.

### THROWING DISTANCE

When you want to throw something, use the following procedure to determine the maximum distance you can throw it.

Divide the weight of the thrown object by your ST to get the weight ratio.

Look at the Ratio column and find the weight ratio (round the ratio up!!!)

Read across to the distance modifier and multiply this by your ST. This is the distance in yards you can throw it.

You cannot normally throw an object weighing more than  $25 \times \text{ST}$  lbs. However, "extra effort" will increase your effective ST - see below.

### DAMAGE FROM THROWN OBJECTS

A thrown object will do approximately *Thrust* damage, as shown in the sidebar, depending on its weight. Round damage down.

## CONTESTS OF POWER

There will be many cases in which one super will try to overwhelm the ability of another with a directly opposed power – Fire vs. Ice, Light vs. Darkness, etc. Some situations will be obvious; a 5d attack versus a 3d defense results in 2d damage. Others are not so clear. Due to the large number of skills, it is impossible to cover all the contingencies.

Generally, the GM can determine the outcome by running a Quick Contest of Power vs. Power. The loser's ability is canceled out – it had no effect that turn. The winner's ability takes effect at a Power equal to the amount he won the contest by (or his original Power, whichever is lower).

*Example:* Zeerox wishes to cancel out a Darkness area with her Illuminate skill. The Darkness was invoked with Power 14, and Zeerox has Illuminate-13. A contest is rolled, and Zeerox wins by 6. The Darkness is canceled, and the area now has an Illuminate at Power 6 on it.

Note that Skill can be traded for Power (see *Extra Effort with Super-Powers*, p. 28) in order to increase the chance of winning such a contest.

## SUPER-DEFENSES

It is also possible for a super to use a skill (even an attack skill) in an attempt to “block” or “parry” an attack of either the same Power or an opposed Power. In terms of game sequencing, this is treated like a normal defense.

If the character is parrying or blocking an attack with a higher Power than the defending Skill, only a portion of the attack can be stopped. On a successful defense, the attack Skill *subtracts* the Power level of the defense. If the defense's Power is equal or greater than the attacking Power, the attack is canceled.

For a super-parry, the super must have a Missile or Jet skill, or another ability that the GM feels could reasonably “parry,” with the Instantaneous enhancement (see p. 50) to let it be used instantaneously. The super-parry is equal to half the user's super skill, plus any passive defenses.

## SPEEDING PLAY OF COMBAT

In many cases, a super will have such a high Dodge that it is almost impossible to hit him, no matter what your skill level. This has the advantage of simulating comics combat very well – heroes rarely get hit by gunfire, fragments, or power blasts. Unfortunately, this can also slow combat down to a crawl, as only critical successes or failures will make a difference in the fight.

There are several mechanisms that can be used to speed up combat. All these are optional rules.

### CRITICAL SUCCESS

Normally, a 3 or 4 is always a critical success, a 5 when modified skill is 15, and a 6 if modified skill is 16+. To make critical success more likely, a 7 is a critical for a modified skill of 20, an 8 for 25, 9 at 30, and 10 at skill level 35. The progression stops here, giving the character a 50% chance of achieving a critical success each time he attacks!

### QUICK CONTESTS

If a character has a Dodge of 13+, it is recommended that combat be resolved with a Quick Contest of Skills between the attacker's weapon or skill level versus Dodge. This will keep combat from bogging down into an interminable series of dodged attacks.

The super should be allowed to use his Parry and Block normally, as these can only be used once per turn under normal circumstances.



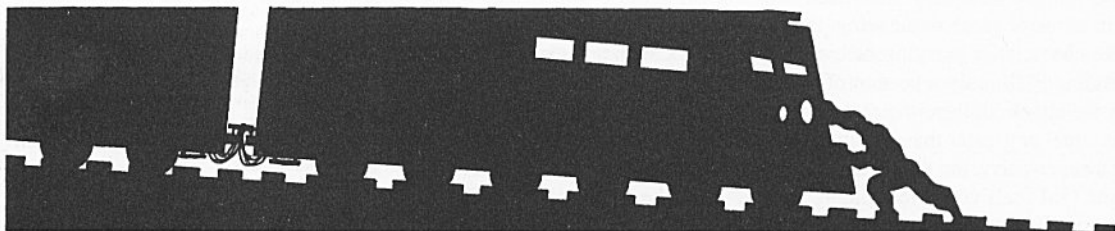
## VARIANT MARTIAL ARTS COMBAT RULES

Traditionally, Martial Arts combat is based on the assumption that a sufficiently trained fighter can battle many opponents at once. The GM may simulate this ability in three ways, using any or all of them in the campaign.

First of all, he may use the Cinematic Fighting rules (p. B183) allowing extra parries per round. However, even this does not reflect adequately the "reality" of Martial Arts fiction.

A second option would be to allow characters with Karate one attack for every eight full levels of skill; the fighter would get two attacks per round at level 16 and three at level 24. With each extra attack comes an extra parry.

Finally, the GM can use the Chambara Fighting Style (see *GURPS Japan* or *Martial Arts*), which allows one attack for every three points of Karate or sword skill over 12 (two attacks at skill level 15, three at 18, and so on).



All three rules can be used together, to allow for an interesting mix of character types. In this case, the Cinematic Fighting rules on p. B183 would apply to any character who had Brawling, while those with Judo and Karate would use the extra-attack options.

*Example:* Three adventurers are planning to storm a terrorist base. The leader, Taro Kozaki, was Trained by a Master and has Karate-19, which allows him to attack three times per round using the Chambara rules. His friend Mark Lopez is an Olympic Karate champion with Karate-20, but was trained conventionally. This gives him two attacks per turn using the Karate optional rule.

Their final companion is Greg Drummond, a mercenary. He has Brawling-20, so can attack once and parry twice per round according to the Cinematic rules (and this explains why he's also carrying an Uzi...).

For a super-block, the super must have a movable force field, or another ability that the GM feels could reasonably "block," with the Instantaneous Enhancement. No ability can both block and parry on the same turn, no matter how it is described. The super-block is equal to half the user's super-skill, plus any passive defense.

Unless the defender has a particular limitation on number of uses of his power, the use of a super-ability to block or parry does not prevent its use on the next turn to attack. However, only one block and one parry are allowed per character per turn. Note that if a power is used to parry, not only does the original attack have a chance of causing accidental damage (see sidebar, p. 80), but the defending power can also cause damage! A block will not do this.

*Example:* Icepick is aiming a Frost Jet at Fireman, who activates a Flame Jet to parry it. His Power 10 is lower than Icepick's Power 14, so a successful parry will only stop part of the attack – a Frost Jet of Power 4 will still get through!

## EXTRA EFFORT

Often, a super will choose to overexert himself to squeeze out that extra performance necessary to accomplish a task. This can increase effective ST dramatically, is fatiguing, and may cause damage.

## STRENGTH AND EXTRA EFFORT

If you are not quite strong enough to lift or move something, you may increase the weight you can handle as follows. Roll against your ST, subtracting 1 for an extra 10% of weight, 2 for an extra 20%, and so on. For a continuing effort (e.g., pushing a stalled car), roll once per minute. Remember that a 17 or 18 always misses. A successful roll moves the item and costs 1 point of Fatigue for every full 100% increase in weight over your normal maximum (minimum of one).

A failed roll means the item did not move and you strained yourself! Lose twice the expected Fatigue. A critical success has no Fatigue cost, and a critical failure costs 1 HT of actual injury in addition to the Fatigue loss. This damage cannot be cured by First Aid, but only by rest.

Thus, a very strong super can increase his normal lift by many times.

*Example:* Bart the Brick has a ST of 80. His normal maximum lift is  $25 \times ST$ , or 2,000 pounds – one ton! But he can lift much more if he has to. Suppose he wants the best possible chance of performing a heavy lift. That means he wants to roll against a 16.  $80 \text{ minus } 16 \text{ is } 64$ . He can handle up to an extra 640% of weight on a successful (16 or under) roll. So he can lift over seven tons if he has to! If he succeeds, he will pay 6 Fatigue, as this is slightly over six 100% increases over normal maximum lift.

You can also increase your jumping in this manner – each point subtracted from your ST increases the distance jumped by one inch for vertical (high) jumps, or two inches for long jumps.

You can also make extra effort for throwing, -1 to your roll for each 10% increase in effective ST.

## POWER AND EXTRA EFFORT

You can also increase your Power by lowering your effective skill level. For every 2 points you reduce your skill level, add 1 to your Power. Each use of a Power in this manner costs 3 Fatigue points except on a critical success – a critical failure burns that skill out for 2d days!

## EXTRA EFFORT STRENGTH

The following table shows the maximum weight a super can lift normally, and the weight he can lift on a roll of 16 or less by expending fatigue. See p. 82 for more information. The formula used to generate these numbers is: Maximum Lift =  $ST \times 25$ . Extra Effort Lift = Maximum Lift +  $[(ST-16) \times (\text{Maximum Lift}/10)]$ . All numbers are in pounds.

Strength	Max. Lift	Extra Effort Lift	Strength	Max. Lift	Extra Effort Lift
17	425	467	160	4,000	61,600
18	450	540	170	4,250	69,700
19	475	617	180	4,500	78,300
20	500	700	190	4,750	87,400
21	525	787	200	5,000	97,000
22	550	880	210	5,250	107,100
23	575	977	220	5,500	117,700
24	600	1,080	230	5,750	128,800
25	625	1,187	240	6,000	140,400
26	650	1,300	250	6,250	152,500
27	675	1,417	260	6,500	165,100
28	700	1,540	270	6,750	178,200
29	725	1,667	280	7,000	191,800
30	750	1,800	290	7,250	205,900
35	875	2,537	300	7,500	220,500
40	1,000	3,400	310	7,750	235,600
45	1,125	4,387	320	8,000	251,200
50	1,250	5,500	330	8,250	267,300
55	1,375	6,737	340	8,500	283,900
60	1,500	8,100	350	8,750	301,000
65	1,625	9,587	360	9,000	318,600
70	1,750	11,200	370	9,250	336,700
75	1,875	12,937	380	9,500	355,300
80	2,000	14,800	390	9,750	374,400
85	2,125	16,787	400	10,000	394,000
90	2,250	18,900	410	10,250	414,100
95	2,375	21,137	420	10,500	434,700
100	2,500	23,500	430	10,750	455,800
110	2,750	28,600	440	11,000	477,400
120	3,000	34,200	450	11,250	499,500
130	3,250	40,300	460	11,500	522,100
140	3,500	46,900	470	11,750	545,200
150	3,750	54,000	480	12,000	568,800

## COMBAT DEADLINE

Once characters become supers, the players are confronted with the temptation to use these fabulous powers. There is little reason to have the ability to hurl thunderbolts if the character never gets the chance to do so. However, this presents a contradiction between the genre and the game system. Supers exist to use their powers, and most of the powers are especially useful in combat, but *GURPS* is a game that encourages avoiding combat. People get killed in *GURPS* combat, and even supers can be vulnerable. In a world where supers can put fists right through normals, what can the GM do to encourage use of super-abilities, yet keep the game from becoming a massacre?

## CHAMBARA FIGHTING STYLE

Chambara is the Japanese name for a (not highly authentic) movie or TV show featuring heroic, highly skilled martial artists, usually ronin or ninja.

The heroic Chambara fighter can take on and destroy a group of lesser foes by running among them and cutting them all down with lightning blows. A Chambara fighter using a readied, balanced weapon may make one additional attack per turn for each 3 points of skill over 12.

Instead of making any blow, the Chambara fighter can change facing – that is, each facing change (to any facing) “costs” one attack.

A Chambara fighter’s Wild Swing (see p. B105) is at a -5 hit penalty, but is *not* limited to a maximum attack roll of 9.

### CHAMBARA DEFENSES

A Chambara fighter with the Combat Reflexes Advantage can sense a surprise attack from behind. Even if the fighter does not change facing, the attack still counts as coming from the side, not the rear, just as it does in a “runaround” (see p. B108) – it is at only -2 to the defender’s active defense.

The typical Chambara defense is to Dodge by jumping. A DX (or Jumping or Acrobatics) roll is required. If successful, the fighter has *double* his normal Dodge defense against that attack. If the roll fails, he gets only the normal Dodge defense. On a critical failure, he *falls*. Each attempt to Dodge by jumping means the fighter may make one fewer attacks on his next turn.

A Chambara fighter may also Evade in close combat, passing through a foe’s hex, by jumping. This tactic also requires a successful DX (or Jumping or Acrobatics) roll *and* costs 4 Move points (virtually ruling it out for average people with heavy encumbrance.) If the roll fails, the attempt to Evade failed. If the roll succeeds, the jumper is at +5 on the Contest of DX to Evade (see p. B113).



## PUBLIC REACTION

The most important limitation on killing is the hero's reputation. Keep a record for each super's public slayings – one who kills often will get a bad reputation very quickly, even if all the victims were criminals. Police will stop talking to him and start harassing him. Newspapers will publish hostile editorials about him, and any official status he has may be lifted or suspended.

Eventually, government agencies will intervene, sending more experienced and tougher crimefighters to bring this loose cannon to heel. This could be the start of a whole new campaign – the PC supers against the very law enforcement agencies they started out to help.

This reputation also comes into play when fighting against metavillains. Whether or not any of the optional damage-reducing rules (below) are in effect, there can be an understanding among heroes and villains that all attacks are made to knock the foe out. If someone gets a reputation of showing no mercy to his foes, his foes will rapidly cease to show any mercy to him.

Using this rule puts control of the situation in the hands of the characters. If they show restraint in their use of force, they won't have any problems. If they are indiscriminate in dealing out death and destruction, their world will quickly become very complicated and *very* dangerous.

Of course, some super-abilities don't realistically allow for "pulled punches." With a flame or electrical attack, the best that a "careful" super can do is attack with limited force, and hope the victim's injuries aren't fatal! If the group wants a high casualty list, there's no problem. But if they want to simulate the comics, then something has to be done to curtail the mortality rate.

Below are several *optional* mechanisms for pulling combat away from the gritty reality of the real world and into the four-color world of the comics.

### OPTIONAL RULE: FLESH WOUNDS

This rule is described on p. B183 as a "cinematic" option. It is especially suitable for a super-brawling campaign! It allows any character who is not actually in combat to spend 1 unused character point, immediately healing all damage except for crippling injuries, all fatigue, and (if that optional rule is being used) all Stun damage. The rationale is that the damage was "only flesh wounds," easily shrugged off by a determined hero!

As a further super-option, the GM can permit the expenditure of character points for recovery *even in the middle of combat* – a "second wind" rule.

### OPTIONAL RULE: STUN DAMAGE

When this option is used, all characters have "stun points" equal to five times their hit points. Stun is not the same as either Hit Points or Fatigue; it is a new stat, and the player must keep track of it separately. When a character's Stun reaches 0, he is knocked unconscious. Consciousness is regained normally (see p. B129) and may be modified by the Recovery advantage. A conscious character regains lost Stun at 1 point per minute of rest.

Unless the attacker *specifically* declares an attack as "shoot to kill" before it is made, all damage taken is Stun only. The GM may also treat damage from falling (or falling objects) as Stun damage.

This will result in characters being knocked out just as frequently as in normal *GURPS* combat, but it will be *extremely* hard for them to be killed. This doesn't eliminate incidental or side effect damage from a power – anyone hit with a 10d fire attack will probably have to go to the hospital for burn treatment, he just won't be immediately *killed* by the attack.



## BULLET DEFLECTION

Several supers are known to parry and deflect bullets – either with their bare hands, with a gadget, or with a seemingly ordinary item of jewelry. This is treated as a special case of Invulnerability to Bullets.

If a super wishes to deflect bullets, he must purchase the Invulnerability with a special -40% limitation – *Must Make a DX Roll*. This allows the hero to deflect one bullet per turn for every 2 points of Move he has. To make a successful deflection, the super must make a successful roll versus DX.

On a failed roll, the bullet does full normal damage – unless he has additional DR against metal, bullets, crushing damage, or something else suitable.

*Example:* Invulnerability to Bullets normally costs 100 points. The -40% limitation lowers the cost to 60 points. This will allow a super with Move 6 to deflect three bullets per turn, each requiring a successful DX roll.

If a character is hit by a mixture of stunning and regular attacks, keep track of Stun and HT separately. All regular damage does Stun damage as well; if a blow is aimed to kill and does 7 points of damage, the target also takes 7 points of Stun.

The advantages of this rule are that the players can now cut loose with full power against their enemies and not worry (much) about having to face murder charges because an NPC failed a HT survival roll. They also won't have to be as concerned about their own characters' deaths, unless they face deliberately murderous foes!

The big disadvantage of this rule is its total unreality. Getting shot 15 times with an assault rifle *doesn't* just stun someone! If this bothers you, then stick with the standard *GURPS* combat system, and let the bodies fall where they may.

### OPTIONAL RULE: DAMAGE REDUCTION

This is a modified form of the Stun Damage rule. The GM sets a particular rate –  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , or whatever he chooses. When a character takes damage, only the amount determined by this modifier is applied to HT, with the full value being applied to Stun. This method allows the GM to fine tune the amount of “unreality” in combat, but requires more bookkeeping, as the players have to keep track of how much damage is real, and how much is Stun.

HT rolls to stay conscious or alive are always made on HT. Unconsciousness is automatic if Stun reaches 0.

*Example:* The Red Spider has HT 15 (and therefore Stun 75) in a campaign with  $\frac{1}{2}$  Damage Reduction. He is hit with an 8d+8 laser that does 38 points damage. His DR of 14 modifies it down to 24 points. The full 24 points would be taken as Stun, reducing his Stun to 51 – he is in no danger of losing consciousness. Half of the 24 is 12 points, so his HT is reduced to 3, slowing him.

The next turn, he gets zapped again with the same laser, this time for 26 points damage. After DR, he would subtract another 12 from his Stun HT, bringing it down to 39 – he is still in no danger of falling unconscious. His HT is reduced by another 6 points, bringing it to -3, still not low enough that he has to make a survival roll. However, he must now roll against HT to stay conscious.

This could continue until his Stun reaches 0, at which point he automatically falls unconscious, or until he misses a HT roll for either consciousness or survival.

## ICE AND DAMAGE

Ice is very different from metal, wood, stone, or brick in the way damage affects it. While two feet of ice is substantially stronger than two feet of wood, it would take much longer to chew through the wood with gunfire than it would the ice. The brittleness of the ice causes it to shatter and chip at a very high rate, reducing both the effective DR and the Hit Points.

A wall of ice has DR of 3 points/inch for the first foot, 4 points/inch for the second foot, 5 points/inch for the third foot, and so on up to a maximum DR of 20 points/inch. Hit points are a flat 3 points/inch.

*Example:* A 2½-foot wall of ice would have DR 36 for the first foot, DR 48 for the second foot, and DR 30 for the remaining 6 inches – for a total DR of 114. It would only have 90 hit points, however.

When a wall of ice takes damage,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the damage (round up) is applied to reducing the DR of the remainder (in that spot). The rest reduces the hit points.

*Example:* The above wall of ice gets hit with a three-round burst from a Browning M2 .50 caliber machine gun (12d damage). The first round does 50 points damage, the second 66, the third 70. Round 1 would reduce the DR by 34 points and the Hit Points by 16, leaving DR 80 and HP 74. The second round would reduce the DR by 44 and the HP by 22, leaving DR 36 and HP 52. The third round will knock out the remaining DR completely, leaving 34 points to come off of the Hit Points. If the gunner can put another round in the same spot, it will probably blow through and hit whatever is on the other side.

Some final useful numbers: A square foot of ice 1" thick weighs 4.8 lbs., and a gallon of water weighs 8.3 lbs.



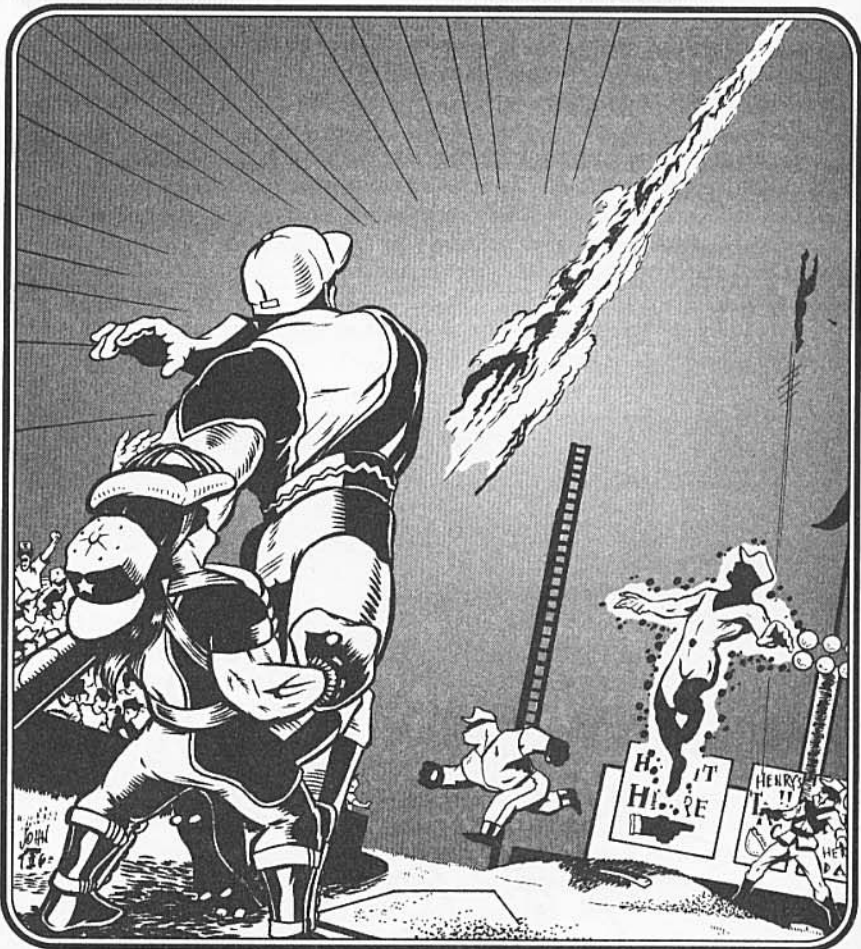
# INTRIGUING CAMPAIGNS

## FRAUGHT WITH DANGER

**T**HE ONGOING CAMPAIGN IS THE BEST FORUM FOR *SUPERS* GAMING. WHILE ONE-SHOT GAME SESSIONS WITH PRE-CREATED CHARACTERS CAN BE FUN, THEY DON'T ALLOW THE PLAYERS TO "FLESH OUT" THEIR OWN CREATIONS AS THEY CAN IN A CAMPAIGN.

THE GM SHOULD DESIGN HIS CAMPAIGN TO MIRROR HIS (AND HIS PLAYERS') FAVORITE SUPER-GENRE . . . SMASH-EM-UP COMICS, REALISTIC SCIENCE FICTION, OR ANYTHING IN BETWEEN. THE GM SHOULD TALK TO THE PLAYERS ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO DO AND WHAT TYPES OF SUPERS THEY ARE GOING TO PLAY. SEE THE SIDEBAR ON P. 87.

PAGE 128 IS A CAMPAIGN PLANNING FORM FOR A SUPER-POWERED GAME. BY FILLING IN THIS SHEET, THE GM CAN MAKE ALL THE NECESSARY DECISIONS FOR HIS OWN CAMPAIGN. BY PASSING COPIES TO THE PLAYERS, THE GM CAN EASILY GIVE THEM ALL THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO CREATE GOOD CHARACTERS.





## GAME BALANCE

Designers spend a great deal of effort on "game balance." The object is to insure that no matter how a player approaches the game, his character need not be weak and ineffectual in an adventure. For a fantasy game, a detective game, or even a science fiction game, this is not difficult – everyone is on about the same level. But it is much harder in a *Supers* game. There are too many variables, and characters will often be at wildly different power types and power levels.

## SCENARIO BALANCE

No arbitrary limits on powers can alleviate the variety that appears among player characters in a *Supers* game. What does the hapless GM do when confronted by a playing group which consists of a feral fighter with animal-like claws, a street-smart detective/martial artist with many skills, a skulker who likes to hug the shadows, a powered-armor character with no stealth mode, and a solar-powered energy projector who glows in the dark? Detective scenarios leave the battlesuit and the energy projector twiddling their thumbs. A punchout that can challenge the armored marvel and the solar hero leaves the feral child and the martial artist in shreds on the ground. Designing an adventure that involves everyone is difficult, but necessary – it's no fun to be doing nothing while others are playing.

There are several approaches to this problem. The simplest (but usually the least adequate) is to limit the game to supers who are at the same power level and have similar abilities. This makes play balance easier to maintain – if everyone is the same, then by definition they're balanced. Unfortunately, the campaign will likely degenerate into the ongoing adventures of the Legion of Super-Clones. Keeping the game from stagnating may well become a full-time job for the GM.

Another solution is harder on the GM but more satisfying to the players. The GM can devise a plot with many different problems and plot elements, appropriate to different types of super-abilities. Most comic books that feature diverse super teams use this system to keep the story line interesting. This puts some players in periods of inactivity, but keeps them suspensefully waiting for the next twist in their own plot, and following the misadventures of their compatriots should keep their interest high.

The third alternative is to cheat, just as the comic writers do. If the team runs into a menace only one of them can deal with, make sure the menace ignores the ones who can't hurt it. After all, it makes more sense to deal with the real threat first, and mop up later . . . This will give the weaker heroes a chance to flee, or (hopefully) to think of something clever.

## CHARACTER BALANCE

An infinite number of characters can be created with the *GURPS Supers* rules – some of which are more suitable for play than others. The GM should discuss character conception with his players *before* they begin designing their characters, and he will need to review the created characters carefully before commencing play.

In a 500- or 750-point campaign, it is easy for a player to design a "world-killer" by spending all or most of his character points on one power. Players who do this are quick to point out that "There's no rule against it!" The player is only partially correct – the overriding rules of *fun* (and its enforcement mechanism, *Word of the GM*) should eliminate such things.

The GM must make a decision not only about how many points a player is allowed to begin with, but about the power levels allowed in his world. There may be nothing wrong with characters throwing around 20d+20 energy

## STARTING THE SUPERS CAMPAIGN

The best way to kick off a continuing *Supers* campaign is with the "origins story." This can be either the story of how the PCs got their powers, or the story of how they first met and formed a super-team. For more about super-teams, see pp. 10-12 and 98-99.

Once the team is formed, the supers will have to deal with issues like team rules, transportation and other common property, and of course a team name. This may be good for a few sessions of role-playing in which nobody gets knocked through a wall! Unless, of course, the new supers disagree *intensely* about how they should run their team . . .

Eventually, of course, the group will get down to its super-business, and the campaign will really be underway.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

For adventure ideas, just consult any comic book! It is often best to start the campaign with a couple of really trite adventure situations, to let the players get comfortable with their new roles. After that, there will be plenty of time to get original. Some of the classic situations are:

- A super spots a crime in progress.
- The heroes are asked to solve a series of baffling super-crimes.
- A super-foe kidnaps a dependent.
- A natural disaster, monster, or super-foe threatens the city.
- An enemy is trying to capture or destroy one (or all) of the heroes.
- Here are a few more "generic" situations that the GM can use to develop super-adventures. More adventure seeds are in the sidebars on pp. 90, 100, and 104.

*New Kids on the Block.* An accident brings out super-abilities in a "normal" friend of the PCs, who now have the job of teaching the new super how to deal with his (or her) powers. (This can be used to bring a new player into the campaign.)

*The Villain Machine.* New super-criminals are appearing right and left. Does someone have the secret of creating a new super at will? If so, they're misusing the ability, and they must be stopped.

*Framed!* A team member is accused of a super-crime . . . and the evidence seems convincing. The framed super must decide whether to turn himself in; the rest of the team must decide how to clear their comrade's name.

*Super-Tournament.* The heroes are invited to a metahuman contest, in which supers of various types compete in trials of skill and strength, with the proceeds to charity. Of course, something will interrupt the competition . . .

## CAMPAIGN TYPE AND SCALE

The point value of the starting characters depends entirely on the campaign. The more points allowed for super-powered abilities, the farther out your characters – and the campaign – will be.

Remember that the cost of the Unusual Background of metahumanity should depend on the rarity of metahuman powers. If supers are relatively common, the Unusual Background should be relatively cheap (see p. 11).

Remember also that a hero (or villain) with powerful backing can easily spend 50 or more points just on a Patron (see sidebar, p. 12).

### THE "REALISTIC" CAMPAIGN

For a "real world, with powers," campaign, a starting point value of 250 or so is appropriate. This will allow supers with one significant power or set of linked powers, or perhaps two or three weaker powers. It is also possible to build a formidable yet realistic "skilled normal" at this point value. This kind of world is described in the *Watchmen* graphic novel and in the *Wild Cards* series (and in the *GURPS Wild Cards* worldbook).

At this power level, supers have an advantage over most normals, but no more so than "normal" highly-talented individuals. Few supers will live outside of society, and many will find their powers to be a mixed blessing.

### THE FOUR-COLOR CAMPAIGN

This is the classic comic-book campaign (named after the four-color process used to print comics). For a campaign with the power level of the average comic book, 500 points is a good starting total. This permits creation of characters with two or three significant powers, or a dozen minor ones. At this level, supers become a very potent force but are still not quite above the law.

The four-color campaign is most fun when it follows the comic-book pattern as closely as possible. Don't end a game session in a climax; set up a cliffhanger that will keep the players in suspense until next week. A multi-session adventure becomes a "limited series." Make up titles for the adventures, or even for each session, as though they were comic books. Think camp. Have fun.

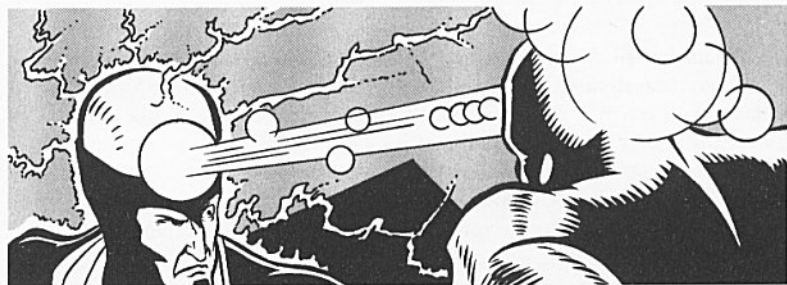
### THE ULTRA CAMPAIGN

For a world-shaking campaign, 750 or even 1,000 points will create heroes and villains of Olympian proportions, each with several major powers.

At this power level, supers can do pretty much as they please without interference from puny mortals; only another super can effectively oppose a super. The GM must be careful that campaigns at this level do not degenerate into mere super-slugfests.

blasts – but then again, there might. A *suggested* limit is to disallow any Power of higher than 20 initially. This will limit attacks to around 20d.

Defense must also be balanced, but characters with "too much defense" are less likely to unbalance a game. A 10d attack will do an average of 35 points of damage. If the normal attack in a campaign is 10d, but everyone runs around with 75 points of DR, then offense becomes almost useless. The GM should establish the limits *he* thinks are reasonable for his campaign, and enforce them.



### PSIONIC LIMITS

Psi powers, while entertaining, also have enormous potential for abuse by PCs. A character that can control the minds of everyone he meets makes an interesting villain – the players will have to be clever to overcome his powers. But if he is controlled by a player, the games become an endless repetition of "Step 1: We see the bad guys. Step 2: Mind Master takes over their minds. Step 3: They turn themselves over to the authorities." Not exactly the stuff that heroic campaigns are made of.

The GM needs to carefully weigh each proposed psionic character against the campaign before turning him loose. In a world where psis are common and most opponents will have some sort of defense versus a psionic attack, then there isn't much of a balance problem. In other worlds, the GM may want to limit a psi's Power to level 10, or even 5, to keep him from being overwhelmingly powerful.

Or the GM may prefer a campaign in which psionic PCs are powerful against normals, but cannot settle super-combats by telepathic takeovers. In that case, the "psi shield" can be introduced. This is a product of the PSI researchers (see p. 107). It is a commonly available item, costing no character points, but it is expensive (perhaps \$1,000). Thus, everyone who really needs one will have one, but most people won't bother. A psi shield looks like nothing more than a small crystal; it can be worn as jewelry or concealed in a pocket. It gives the wearer a Mind Shield with an effective Power of 12 and Skill of 3. More powerful shields exist, but they're *very* expensive.

### COMBAT BALANCE

*GURPS* tries to simulate real-world combat accurately – which means that combat can be deadly. And combat between people who shoot laser beams and punch through steel plate can be *very* deadly. The GM can use any of several optional rules to make combat less deadly, or he can let the characters live with the realistic consequences of their powers!

Several ways to deal with this question are discussed in the *Combat* chapter (see p. 84). The GM may change the rules to make combat less deadly, provide background reasons why even the vilest foes will pull their punches, or accept a game where PCs die! Choose the one that will best fit your genre and background, and the players' preferences.

## CAMPAIGN DESIGN

Good campaigns don't just spring up overnight – the GM (and eventually the players) puts a lot of thought, sweat, and hours into creating the shared universe. While there is no sure formula for a good campaign, there are several things that will get the design off on the correct foot. These hints aren't just for the *Supers* genre; they apply to any background from fantasy to outer space.

### WORLD DESIGN

When you sit down to design your world, the first thing you have to do is answer some questions. If you know the people who will be playing in the campaign, spend some time talking with them and find out what *they* want to do. This gives the players a sense of contribution toward the final form of the world they'll be spending their time in, and will save you from wasting your time down avenues that your players will never follow.

### SETTING

Does the campaign take place on Earth? If so, what year? The advantage of playing in real-world Earth is that you are on familiar ground. If the players need to know how long it takes to fly from New York to Los Angeles and how much it costs, you can call a travel agent and get a correct answer immediately. Background materials are easy to get – most cities have street maps available that are far more detailed than will ever be offered in a gamebook.

NPCs are also readily available – if you need a rock concert, just have the Rolling Stones tour pass through town. Everyone will be familiar with most of the “big-name” celebrities, and as the characters become famous, the players have a chance to interact with people they might never meet in real life.

Plot ideas are easy to come by – just buy a copy of today's paper. There is always someone needing help or rescue, or a situation that can only be handled properly by the supers!

If you are going to use Earth, though, you will need to modify it to take into account the presence of the supers. Depending on the background of these powers, this could be easy or difficult. The sample world background in Chapter 7 is a good place to start with four-color supers in a “real world” setting. A good source for *very* gritty realism is the *GURPS Wild Cards* worldbook (based on the award winning science-fiction series edited by George R.R. Martin).

Setting the campaign on another world is the second option. This has the advantage of keeping the players *much* more off balance. Unfortunately, it radically increases the amount of work that the GM must do before the campaign is ready.

### BACKGROUND

The next question to answer is “Where did all these powers come from?” There are an infinite number of ways to answer this, but they can be clumped into a few major groups.

**Genetic mutation.** Supers are descended from normal people, but something happened to change their DNA structure – radiation is the usual source, but a virus or disease is also possible. Many variations are possible. Is the mutation inheritable (will supers' children also have powers?) How common is mutation? Is there more than one way for it to happen? What determines the powers? Can the mutation be caused intentionally, or is it strictly accidental? A “mutation” scenario works well for a campaign in which supers are plentiful.

**Extraterrestrial or divine intervention.** An extremely powerful outside force grants power to certain people. This allows for some interesting background ideas. Who gives villains their power? Are evil ETs building their own super

## SUPER INCOME AND OUTGO

Super-abilities give the PCs some unique opportunities to earn money. But they can also lead to tremendous expenses. Both of these things can lead to some great adventure ideas.

### MAKING MONEY

**Bounty Hunting.** Most super-criminals will have high prices on their heads. Killers will be worth the most money, followed by property-destroyers. Those who merely steal or play pranks will be worth the least. And, of course, some non-powered criminals will be worth rewards. Sometimes, private individuals will offer rewards. In the U.S., no reward will be paid for simply killing a criminal, but other nations will not be so squeamish. Independent vigilantes can do very well this way; members of “official” superteams may have to donate the money to charity.

**Super-Jobs.** Many super-abilities are marketable on an everyday basis. See the *Supertemps* sidebar, p. 101.

### SPENDING MONEY

**Damages.** Super-battles can do incredible damage (see sidebar, p. 79). A lot of super-income may go toward repairing New York every month or so. Of course, there is an alternative. A squad of supers can do a great deal to *repair* damages. Some may do it professionally; others will just fly in to help out a friend.

**Charity.** Money can always be given away. In addition to the obvious charities, there may be a fund or funds set up to pay for damages done by metahumans in the line of duty! Funds for research into the nature of super-powers, or for victims of super-criminals, might also be popular.



## THE VILLAIN CAMPAIGN

It's quite possible to design a campaign that turns the tables on the normal genre, by making the PCs into super-criminals and letting their antagonists be the forces of law and order. In some ways, this will give the PCs more freedom. Crimefighters usually react to threatening situations, but criminals can act and strike wherever they please. This means that the players will have to plan their capers well in advance; they can't just say "Today we'll rob the bank," and expect the GM to come up with a good scenario immediately.

Villain PCs might as well take a super-group or large police force as an Enemy. If they are successful in their criminal careers, they will soon be on the Most Wanted list anyhow!

Players should keep a sense of humor and proportion in this type of campaign. The likely outcome, sooner or later, is that the super-crooks will be behind bars in a very secure facility. The GM shouldn't feel guilty when this happens.

### MOTIVATION

Most super-crooks are just in it for their own profit. Some have other goals, though. Possible motivations for a criminal, or a criminal team, can include:

Revenge, either on an individual or a group. The revenge need not be deadly; humiliating the enemy might be better.

Public notice and recognition as the Greatest (or Smartest) Criminals In The World.

Fund-raising for a cause. Rob from the rich, and give to . . . whomever.

Public attention to a cause. Carried out violently, this becomes super-terrorism, which is certainly "realistic," but (we hope) not to most players' tastes. But a super-Greenpeace team, saving the whales by stopping the whalers *without harming* them, would make an interesting campaign.

### VILLAINOUS ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Jailbreak!** The super-crooks may have planned to rob a bank – but one of their number has been captured by the law. Time for a rescue!

**Now is the Time for All Good Supers...** The world (or nation, or city) is threatened by some danger so great that the Law will extend amnesty (at least temporarily) to any metahumans who will help to face the menace. This gives the chance for the PCs to team up with characters who are usually fighting them.

**Gang War.** Another gang of super-crooks is muscling in on the PCs' territory.

**The Turncoat.** A super-crimefighter, perhaps a former Enemy of the group or one of its members, has recently "gone bad" in a very public way, committing several flashy thefts. Now he wants to join the PC group. Can he be trusted?

groups? Can the powers be taken away by the agency that gave them? Are the powers granted by a machine (that could be captured), or are they granted by some sort of mystical/unfathomable power source? What criteria is used to determine who gets which powers, or who gets powers at all? A scenario like this can lead to a strict division of supers between the Servants of Good and the Forces of Evil, with few or no neutrals.

**Accidents.** Each super has a unique origin. This gives the players great scope for creativity (see p. 6), if not outright silliness. Most accidents, if not all of them, will be unrepeatable. This is especially suitable for a campaign in which there are very few supers.

*All of the above!* That's the rationale of the IST world (see Chapter 7).

### ACCEPTANCE

How do the ordinary people react to supers? Are they hunted as freaks, or adored as saviors? What about the law and the super? Are they vigilantes barely tolerated by the authorities, or are they formally licensed and controlled?

What about supers in other countries? How are they treated? Are they tools of the government, or are they considered traitors to be killed if possible?

### EVERYDAY LIFE

One of the traps a *Supers* player or GM can fall into is categorizing all supers as either crimefighters or criminals. Certainly, many powers seem useful only for combat, but there are lots of other jobs out there for the super-powered individual.

Super-strong characters have many uses outside of combat. There are always jobs that need a lot of pressure or lifting power in constrained places where cranes and derricks have no room to move. Psionically powered characters (and people feigning psi powers) can always find work as mediums, tracers of lost people, and dowsters.

And imagine the uses of Gravity or Earth Powers for someone in the mining business. Anyone with the Tunneling skill has people knocking at his door. Similarly, fliers have lots of scope for activity, and people who can withstand and manipulate extremes of temperature are always useful.



But many supers may have no interest in using their powers. What about the woman who gains her power after becoming a top-notch research scientist? If her forte is radiation control or gravity control, or if she develops X-Ray or Microscopic Vision, this can be a boon. But if she suddenly sprouts wings or gains the strength to lift a truck; what good does it do in her career? Many supers ignore their powers (or even hide them) so they can get on with their real lives.

Super criminals are not necessarily world-beaters, either. A telepath who uses his abilities for insider trading is a criminal, but hardly a worthy target for the Amazing Adventurers superteam. Gambler telekinetics fall into the same category.

And many metahumans use their powers in the entertainment industry. For instance, there might be a special class of wrestling for super-strong combatants. Likewise, supers with really spectacular special effects may find that exhibitions of their powers, either solo or in conjunction with some other show, is a lot more lucrative than hunting out bad guys.

In short, supers need not be costumed crimefighters (or spymashers, or bodyguards, or bounty hunters, or any of the usual comic book activities). In fact, they can be almost anything.

Still, the acquisition of power does inspire some people to use it to make the world a better place to live in. Some, of course, want a better place for *them* to live in, even at the expense of the rest of the world.

## ADVENTURE DESIGN

More than anything else, campaign success depends on the quality of the adventures that the heroes are involved in. If a GM wants to be successful, he must offer entertaining and well-plotted adventures, whether taken from off-the-shelf products or designed from scratch.

### PLOTS

The trick to writing an adventure is to make sure that everyone involved has something to do. A well-designed scenario is *not* just a big combat involving hero team A versus villain team X! This may please the players for a few games, but after that, it grows stale.

There are several ways to plan an adventure that will keep all the players interested. The details depend on the specific characters, of course. Some possibilities:

Develop multiple plot *threads* – elements that are scattered about in such a manner that different players can pursue different paths, and all wind up in the same spot at the same time for the final showdown.

Include clues or other information which can only be gained by team members working in concert. There should be opportunities for the muscleman, the psi, and the ninja all to show their stuff, and no one specialty should be the clear key to victory.

Present problems which can be solved just as well (or better) by the use of *normal* skills. This will encourage well-balanced characters and more roleplaying. Sure, Mr. Anybody can slip into the CIA's computer room . . . but unless he can make Computer Operation and Research rolls, it won't do him any good.

Character disadvantages can be used to create campaign plots – enemies will appear, secrets can be revealed, or dependents can be threatened. All of these are good ways to get the PCs involved in both their character and the campaign.

## DIALOGUE

Comic-book heroes and villains often seem to spend more time talking than they do fighting. Every blow is followed by a threat, an insult, or a whole speech.

So, in a campaign that follows the comic-book pattern, players should do their loquacious best to follow the style. Heroes and villains alike should make good use of lines like:

"Aha! I have you now!"

"You *fiend!* You're a traitor to the whole human race!"

"And destroying you is only my first step! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You may *think* you have me, but you're due for a surprise!"

"Do you really think your feeble powers can stop *me?*"

And so on . . .

The GM should give an extra character point per session to anyone who livens up the game with good comic-book dialogue.



## DEATHTRAPS

In the comic books, evil villains can never bear to finish a fight the easy way. Instead of sensibly shooting a helpless hero, they will always take him prisoner and gloat over him (revealing all their plans in the process). Then they will leave the hero in a situation that (they think) will surely kill him. Sometimes they stay to watch, but usually they leave on urgent business elsewhere . . . and, through clever use of his powers or just his wits, the hero escapes!

Fortunately, this convention of the genre works very well for roleplaying games, so GMs of four-color games should follow it whenever possible.

## SUPER-POWERING AN EXISTING CAMPAIGN

If an existing campaign is getting a little bit predictable, spice it up by turning it into a *Supers* campaign! The GM arranges a situation which gives the PCs superpowers, and they embark on new careers. Probably (though not necessarily) they will form a super-team, and set out to fight crime, get rich, or both.

Each existing PC is given an appropriate number of extra character points (see sidebar, p. 88) for the type of campaign that is to be run. Each character is also allowed to pick enough new disadvantages to bring his disadvantage point total up to 100. The "origin story" must explain the new disadvantages. Physical or mental problems could be side-effects of the transformation. A group Enemy could be a paranoid government body, or a super-criminal who got his powers at the same time the PCs did.

If the situation that gave the PCs their powers was unique, then a high Unusual Background cost (p. 11) would be appropriate – though this is not necessary unless the GM is concerned with "balancing" supers against non-supers. However, it is often better to set up a situation that gives super-abilities to many people. That way, the newly created supers will have worthy opponents!

If incidental or unplanned combat occurs, keep it short – save the slugfest for a dramatic climax. If a super surprises two gangsters trying to kidnap his fiancée, this is not the time for a full-scale battle. The gangsters should either give up or go down quickly. After all, they are trying to kidnap the fiancée because she is *not* a super – they weren't hired for their ability to take on superbeings!

When your climactic battle *does* come around, it should be an epic. Include lots of loose objects that can be picked up and thrown, glass windows that can be shattered, and a few innocent bystanders to make things dicey for the heroes.

Matching four supers versus four equally powerful villains is fun and fairly easy; trying to match eight supers versus eight villains will turn into an all-night combat and probably give the GM a nervous breakdown. It is much easier to match a large super-team against a small number of higher-powered villains – this will encourage teamwork, as no single character will be able to go one-on-one with a foe.

### THE VILLAIN IS WINNING!

By no means should the heroes win every fight. That's boring. Any number of great plots can start off with the heroes being humiliated, chased away, or even taken prisoner. It's a good idea to avoid telling the players when their characters were supposed to lose, of course. Just don't *kill* anybody in such an "introductory" battle.

But there will be times, through bad luck or player carelessness, when the PCs are losing a battle they weren't supposed to. There are several ways the GM can get out of this:

*Deus ex machina.* The Mounties, the Marines, the IST, or *somebody*, comes to the rescue, just in time. A subtler way to handle this is to quickly assign combat abilities, or just berserk behavior, to one of the "normals" cluttering up the scenery. "As Scatterbolt is preparing his deathblow, there is a grinding noise. One of the vehicles he wrecked is still moving! It's a pickup truck, and its driver is aiming straight for Scatterbolt! The villain dodges, but he's distracted, and his energy blast misses both the helpless hero and the truck. He won't recharge for another five seconds. What do you do now?"



*Fake it!* The GM, controlling the villains, can let them act in a careless or illogical fashion. Or the GM can roll the NPC villains' dice in secret and cheat in the PCs' favor, assigning a missed attack where necessary to save their lives. (Never let the players suspect you are doing this; for many, it would ruin the game if they knew.)

*What happens, happens.* Or the GM can simply let some of the supers be outclassed. A truly entertaining GM can afford to do this, since the players whose characters have been defeated can enjoy watching the game, just as they would enjoy reading a comic book.

## CLIMAX

In most cases, the climax of an adventure will be a combat. As in the comics, the combat doesn't always have to be between the supers and their arch-enemy. The true villain can escape while his henchmen hold off the PCs, or he may only appear on a video screen to taunt the heroes before activating the doomsday device (with an ample countdown for the characters to find and disarm it, of course!).

In a four-color campaign, style is more important than reality when it comes to adventures! Sure, the logical bad guy would blow the hero's head off with an elephant gun when he had his foe helpless. This runs counter to everything a comic-reality insists on. Instead of instant death, a captured super should find himself in a *potentially* deadly situation (see sidebar, p. 91) – the walls are closing in, or the room is filling with water, or maybe he is strapped to a rocket hurtling into space. Whatever it is, there should be a way out, either through clever use of his own powers or timely intervention from his friends.

## THE CONTINUING CAMPAIGN

In the ongoing *Supers* campaign, there are several elements that can help give the players a sense of continuity. The first is the "over-arching" villain. From game to game, the PCs have to foil the plots of one individual. This bad guy may control a group of evil supers, or may be a master gadgeteer supplying normals with high-tech equipment. The heroes will continually defeat his fiendish plans, but are always a bit too late to capture him. Always give the foe an escape route. He might have a secret tunnel to a hidden jet plane, or he could endanger civilians that the supers will feel duty-bound to protect while he makes his getaway.

If the team has an overall mission, this also leads to campaign continuity. This should, by its nature, be a task that can never be finished. (If it *is* finished, the team will need a new reason for being!)

The individual goals of the super-characters are also important to the continuing story. If their hopes, fears, ambitions, and love lives are being roleplayed, this will supply *human* background and purpose to the campaign.

An interesting prop for fleshing out the campaign is the newsletter. This doesn't have to be professionally printed – markers and construction paper are perfectly good. Use lurid headlines ("X-Team Battles Dr. Death in Sky over Montopolis! Evil Mutant Escapes with Hostage") and a brief description of the outcome of the last game. This is also a great place to throw in stories from around the world. These can make adventure hooks should the PCs decide to investigate.

Finally, don't neglect the mundane world. When April 14th rolls around, make sure that the metahumans are sweating their tax returns! Have a festive exchange of presents at Christmas time, or send the supers out to guard the streets during Halloween. The more "real" the world feels, the more the campaign will benefit from it.

Super abilities can be introduced into other genres, providing a new twist to old backgrounds. For instance:

### FANTASY

Superhuman powers will be mistaken for magic by most observers. In a world where magic is common, this can be an advantage; anti-magic attacks won't work on the supers. Where magic is rare or outlawed, though, anyone who displays metahuman powers will be accused of witchcraft!

Or, if metahuman powers become common in a fantasy or medieval situation, supers will be offered rank and privilege, and invited to serve local nobles, with a good chance of marrying into the nobility. In time, a caste system might develop, with a super-powered aristocracy ruling "normal" commoners.

### SPACE

Metahumans can fit right into a science fiction campaign. Alien supers – or whole alien races with remarkable powers – can be created. "Normals" have more of a chance to stand up to supers, or even duplicate many of their feats, with technological aid. Psi powers are already a staple of many future worlds.

### PULP/HORROR/DETECTIVE/SPY

Any campaign set in an "action" genre can be spiced up by the addition of superhuman powers. Keep in mind that if metahuman powers are rare, a telepathic detective can crack any case! Super-powered spies will likewise be almost unstoppable unless the Other Side has a few of their own.

Eldritch monstrosities, insane cultists, and star-spawned horrors make worthy opponents for a super-team. Remember to call for Fright Checks when your all-American heroes first encounter *The Thing That Eats Eyes*.

This type of game can also work well if the super PCs have an *utterly* Unusual Background; perhaps they are the *only* super-beings they know of. In that case, they may wish to keep not just their identities, but their very existence, secret. Perhaps they are accidental "good" creations of the very evil they are fighting.

### FARTHER OUT

For a truly strange campaign, what about super-powered cavemen, autoduelists, cowboys . . . Just because the comics never tried a particular crossover is no reason you can't.

Or a dimension-hopping foe could force the super PCs into a campaign that jumps from one background to another . . . medieval Japan, the Old West, the far future, and anyplace else for which the GM can find (or create) a sourcebook!

# A UNIQUE CAMPAIGN WORLD

## OF SUPERS AND SOCIETY

**O** IN A "REAL-WORLD" BACKGROUND, IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT SUPER-ABILITIES ARE A VERY "UNREAL" THING. THE CHANCE THAT DOZENS OF DIFFERENT POWERS MIGHT APPEAR IS SLIM AT BEST. TO ADD A BIT OF REALITY, WE POSIT A SINGLE CAUSE FOR MOST SUPER ABILITIES, FAR BACK IN THE MISTS OF TIME . . .

### THE SEEDERS

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WERE THE SEEDERS. JUST WHO OR WHAT THE SEEDERS ARE IS STILL SOMETHING OF A MYSTERY, THOUGH THEY STILL OPERATE TODAY. THEY MAY BE RELATED TO THE PRECURSORS OF *GURPS SPACE*; THEY MAY EVEN BE THE PRECURSORS. NO ONE IS SURE. THEY ARE KNOWN ONLY BY THEIR SOLE OCCUPATION OVER THE MILLENNIA - FOSTERING INTELLIGENT LIFE THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY.





Their *modus operandi* is to visit a planet devoid of intelligent life and leave the potential for sapience behind them. When the Seeders "cultivate" a planet, they give two things to their creations: the potential for intelligence and the potential to evolve a racial superpower. The type of power will be determined by the environment and the stresses experienced by the race as it evolves; almost all the races in the galaxy have some characteristic power or powers – except for humans.

In the late Cretaceous period, the Seeders came to Earth. They found little to work with, so they made a few alterations in the environment and left. A mere half-million years ago they returned and were pleased to discover a promising creature: *Homo erectus*. They altered the prehumans' gene structure and left the Sol system, unaware that the sun had become unusually active. Solar-flare radiation of extraordinarily high energy penetrated the Earth's ionosphere and irradiated *Homo erectus*, still genetically vulnerable from the Seeders' alterations. Those hominids who did not die outright mutated and evolved faster – but their genes for paranormal powers were suppressed. Rather than a single meta-power, humanity developed keen intelligence and adaptability.

Until 1924, it was a rare individual who displayed metahuman powers. The few supers who manifested abilities were held to be saints or mystics, to be venerated or destroyed at the whim of the crowd. But in 1924, Earth was bathed by a wave front of gamma rays from an exploding star hundreds of light-years away. This radiation passed unnoticed, but it awoke some of the Seeder power genes now extant in every human being.

Mankind regained its birthright – but without the stresses of evolution to mold it, it is an unpredictable inheritance. Of all the worlds in the galaxy, Earth is the only one where no two people have exactly the same meta-power.

Every individual on the face of the planet possesses some of the Seeder genes. Some have more than others. Some have such a large concentration that they are born with active powers; others require a "push" or intensive physical training before their Seeder genes will activate. Approximately 1 in 100,000 people is a super; another 1 in 10,000 is a latent super. As the genes proliferate through the generations, the number of active supers in the human race will increase, until everyone will possess powers.

The timeline beginning on p. 96 shows the effects of the Seeder genes on recent human history.

## SUPERS AND THE LAW

While the law, for the most part, technically treats superbeings the same as other people, in reality this is not always the case. In the U.S., during the first rush of public enthusiasm for comic-book heroes brought to life, anti-vigilante laws were weakened, and some legal proceedings were altered to cater to the "well-documented" need of a super to protect his "secret identity." This may change in the future, but at present, most people are satisfied with the way the system works. A large number of criminals are caught and convicted, and this pleases the public, so few lawmakers are willing to openly challenge public opinion.

Still, not all powers are welcomed. In particular, a careless or nosy mind-reader can be sued for invasion of privacy or even theft of information! However, criminal law does not allow a convicted criminal to sue or have arrested a telepath whose actions caused him to be caught and convicted – even though the information gained by the mind-reading itself is not admissible evidence. American and British law does allow telepathic cross-examination of witnesses. The procedure is described in the sidebar on p. 107.

## THE WORLD OF THE I.S.T.

The game-world discussed in this chapter was created by Bob Schroeck. It is described in much greater detail in his *GURPS International Super Teams*, a 128-page worldbook released in 1991. Check it out . . .

## DEFINITIONS

**accidental:** A super who received his powers by misadventure or chance. Some "accidentals" undoubtedly had super-powered genes which were activated by the accident; others may have had no genetic super-abilities at all.

**crunchy:** Derogatory term used by supers, especially those with high ST and toughness, to refer to normals.

**magic:** Still unexplained fully by researchers, although many reliable examples can be found. Some postulate that it is in fact a form of psionic ability, but this does not explain all aspects of the phenomenon.

**manufactured:** Any super given his powers by intentional efforts.

**metahuman:** Any person exhibiting powers and abilities outside the human norm.

**mundane:** A normal (see below). The "mundane world" is the world of normals, as opposed to the company/society/culture of supers.

**mutant:** A super whose genetic pattern at birth defined his powers, which then manifested themselves automatically (usually at puberty).

**MV:** Meta-villain. A super who uses his power for evil.

**normal:** Any person who does not manifest metahuman powers.

**seeders:** A starfaring species apparently responsible for the existence of many of the galaxy's sapient races. When creating the genetic potential for an intelligent race, the Seeders routinely insert gene complexes for paranormal powers in order to provide more survival capability. As a result, nearly all races in the galaxy have a distinctive racial power or power cluster.

**super:** Common term for a metahuman.

**super normal:** Common term for a person who displays no metahuman powers, but who is as personally formidable as a super.

**techno:** Any person who, through the use of devices or gadgets, has abilities approximating those of a metahuman. The IST's powered-armor troops are the best-known technos.

**vig:** A vigilante. A crimefighter super with no official status.

## IST LOCATIONS

The U.N., in what some consider a very heavy-handed reminder of its growing power, has an International Super Team (IST) stationed in the capital city of each member nation. Additional teams are positioned in other major population centers when the country is too large to be covered by a single team (IST Los Angeles, IST New York, and IST Dallas, for example). Other ISTs are stationed near trouble zones, like the proposed Sinai base.

Every few years, there are waves of hysteria over mind control powers, fanned by supermarket tabloids ("Texas Housewife Admits: I Was The Love Slave Of A KGB Telepath!"), ambitious politicians, and political fringe groups. If not for the Bonded Telepaths' Organizations (p. 106) in the U.S. and the U.K., witch hunts might occur with frightening regularity. The goodwill which these groups maintain, both with the public and with key politicians, helps defuse potential panics. Still, smears are attempted.

The most laughable in recent times was the 1963 effort by the Fred Birch Society to "expose" the Beatles as sinister mentalists capable of holding sway over thousands of young girls.

Still, strict "Right of Privacy" laws have been enacted not only in the United States, but in many other countries. Criminal invasion of privacy is a federal offense in the U.S., and covers a broad range of charges in language not unlike that of the British Official Secrets Act. (Supreme Court interpretations of the U.S. Personal

## 60,000,000 BC - 1952

**ca. 60,000,000 BC** - Seeder fleet enters Sol system, modifies Earth's climate slightly, and wipes out the dinosaurs to allow mammals to evolve.

**ca. 500,000 BC** - Seeders return and perform genetic modification on *Homo erectus*, the ancestor of mankind.

**ca. 495,000 BC** - A series of solar flares alters the Seeders' implanted gene structure, suppressing the power traits in *Homo erectus*.

**ca. 400,000 BC** - Early *Homo sapiens* appears.

**ca. 35,000 BC** - First true modern humans appear.

**ca. 35,000 BC to 1924 AD** - The Seeder power genes remain dormant. Occasionally an individual activates his latent talents sufficiently to demonstrate "magic" or "holy" powers. Suspected metahumans from this period include Moses, Alexander the Great, Attila, Albertus Magnus, Joan of Arc, Rasputin, Christ, Hitler, da Vinci, and Joseph Smith.

**1924** - The wavefront from a stellar explosion hundreds of light-years away reaches Earth. Although it is undetected by astronomers, it includes a high density of gamma rays, which re-activate the Seeder gene in many humans. First mutant born in France (Destructeur).

**1939** - World War II starts in Europe.

**1941** - Stresses of military training reveal more metahumans: Kalibanos, the Stalker, Hunter, and other "Mystery Man" heroes. The first reliable psis appear as well: Minder and Mist.

Hitler's *Urbemensch*, the world's first superteam, make their first battle-field appearance. Unopposed, the *Urbemensch* help cut a swath across France.

U.S. joins war in Europe and Pacific.

**1942** - Newsreel footage of *Urbemensch* prompts the "Los Angeles Project" to find and train metahumans for the war effort.

**1943** - The Los Angeles Project fields its "Strike Force A" (nicknamed "The Psycho Squad"), consisting of Hunter, Lucifer, Sgt. Strike, and the Gadgeteer. Shortly thereafter, the USSR's "Glorious People's Metahuman Defense Collective" is unveiled: Star, Bolshoi, the first Red Knight, and the mysterious Mikhail.

British superteam appears: John Bull, Union Jack, Silver, and Mist. French underground is rumored to be aided by a quartet of metahumans.

**1943 to 1945** - All in all, nearly 50 metahumans appear publicly on all sides of the war. Their efforts mostly cancel out, as they spend much time battling each other and acting as cover for normal troops. Of these metahumans, 37 die in action. More effective (and having a higher survival rate) are those who remain undercover during the war, such as Hitler's personal metahuman bodyguard and the French Resistance heroes.

**1945** - Germany surrenders. German rocket scientists, metabiologists, and metahumans are divided between the U.S. and USSR.

U.N. charter signed, June 26, San Francisco.

German powered infantry armor project discovered near Berlin, and genetics experiments designed to create more metahumans (and their results) found at Dachau and Auschwitz. They are confiscated and studied by the Allied governments.

U.S. "Manhattan Project" perfects atom bomb; Hiroshima and Nagasaki destroyed. WWII ends.

**1946** - French Resistance heroes form core of French national supergroup. Other lately Nazi-dominated countries encourage the formation of their own teams of metahumans.

Nuremberg trials convict 22 German leaders and five German metahumans for war crimes. At least two other German metahumans are suspected to have escaped.

**1948** - Berlin Blockade and Airlift. First documented flying hero aids U.S. efforts.

State of Israel founded, May 14. Arab League attacks Israel, but is defeated in July by an international team of Jewish metahumans. Arab League nations lack a sufficient counterforce, as Islamic populations have been killing metahumans as demons despite their governments' objections.

**1949** - NATO founded.

**1952** - U.S. explodes H-bomb. "Mind Control Scandal" in England. Watson and Crick discover the structure of DNA. Serious study into the genetic basis of powered humans begins.

## IST TIMELINE

Continued on p. 99

Privacy Act of 1974 establish that an individual's right to privacy outweighs the government's "need to know," except for the minimal information required for tax records and the like. This has been exploited by many secretive supers.)

## INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

Theft insurance rates in areas with more than a few supers may stay reasonable, but after one or two knock-down battles, *property* insurance rates may skyrocket! It is not unheard of for heroes to be thanked for their help and then quietly asked to leave town. Heroes with a publicly-known identity may not even be able to get insurance for their loved ones, let alone themselves!

Supers are always accountable for the damage that they do, and many a super-crook has been jailed on nothing more than "Reckless Endangerment" and "Malicious Damage" charges. "Reckless Endangerment" is the one law that affects supers the most, for even heroes are vulnerable to prosecution if they are careless with their powers. A few supers buy liability insurance to cover the damage they might do, but the rates are outrageous. The DMI (p. 99) provides liability insurance for approved superteams.

## SECRET IDENTITY

U.S. law accepts the secret identity for costumed supers. Essentially a left-over from WWII and other military conflicts where metahuman operatives were given code names, this law recognizes that public knowledge of a super's real name is not always a good thing. Supers may testify in court without revealing their real names if they are members of a DMI-approved team (see p. 99), government agents, or U.N. IST members. Due to recognition of a defendant's right to confront his accuser, a masked hero cannot testify at a trial where he is the sole eyewitness for the prosecution. The super can act as an expert witness to support other testimony, should he so qualify.

## THE UNITED NATIONS

One of the most powerful organizations in the world is the United Nations. Founded in the paranoia of the post-WWII years, it has evolved over the last four decades into a force to be reckoned with. By the end of the century, it may well be a true world government.

Elsergany and Kupelian's charter, reflecting the mood of the post-war years, specifically denies any single country the ability to overrule a U.N. decision, and grants the organization the power and right to establish "police forces" to enforce world peace. Save for the Korean conflict, it is only recently that the U.N. has been stretching its muscles. Beginning with its response to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the U.N. has begun to take an active role in policing the world. In 1982, one year after the European Economic Community (EEC) was joined by Greece (and its already-impressive superteam joined by Silverbolt and the other Greek heroes), the U.N. voted to ban all national military superteams, on the grounds that they were "destabilizing" influences. The U.N. made this surprise ultimatum stick by revealing its own metahuman forces - made up of contracted private groups, volunteer teams from the smaller nations, and its ace in the hole, the secret U.N. team which had been employed covertly in the Afghan conflict. National governments were still allowed to employ non-military metahumans, including bodyguards for government officials and law-enforcement personnel.

Surprisingly, most nations capitulated. Several, like Libya, withdrew from the U.N. Others, like Israel, the United States, and the Soviet Union, "officially" disbanded their teams while redeploying them in permitted positions or subsidizing them as ostensibly private groups. (See *The DMI*, p. 99.)



## PC IST MEMBERS

Metahuman PCs who wish to be part of an IST must pay character points for the advantage:

**IST MEMBER** **65 POINTS**  
+ RANK

The PC is a member of a U.N. International Super Team. An IST member has a Patron: The U.N. (giant multinational organization, can supply equipment over the starting wealth, appears quite often) worth 70 points. The PC has a Duty to the U.N. almost all the time (15 or less) worth -15 points. IST members get +3 reaction from citizens of member nations. They have -1 reaction from citizens and government officials of non-member nations, and -3 from criminals. (Advantage costs of these reaction modifiers cancel each other.)

All IST metahumans have Legal Enforcement Powers (international jurisdiction, free to violate local civil ordinances in the performance of their duties but not able to kill with impunity or ignore civil rights), worth 10 points.

Since the IST is a military organization, all IST members must have some Military Rank. All metahumans are commissioned at a rank of at least captain when they are accepted for active duty; this is a Military Rank of 4. Of course, characters may reach higher ranks; each local team will be led by a super of Rank 6 or 7. If that person has appropriate diplomatic or military skills, he may actually be the local IST commander; otherwise, a very skilled "normal" U.N. appointee will hold that position.

Military Rank of 4 would cost 20 points; higher rank costs 5 points/level. Supers under contract to the IST (see p. 98) don't have to have Military Rank.

## IST POWERED INFANTRYMAN

The powered armor worn by the IST support teams is the current state-of-the-art in mass-produced battlesuits. It is effectively TL8 equipment. While the U.N. is not the only organization with this technology, it has the largest active force of powered infantry in the world.

The battlesuit is based on a regular set of TL8 medium body armor (PD 6, DR 25), with the following additional capabilities:

### **SUPER OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES:**

Effective ST 25 (150 points).

Sonic Blast-16(5) from wrist-mounted gun. Limitation: Damage Stuns Only (-30%). Enhancement: Area Effect (+50%) with Increased Area  $\times 3$  (+60%). Net cost: 87 points. Effect: 5d stun damage over an area 4 hexes in radius.

### **OTHER SUPER CAPABILITIES**

Flight, with one level of Super Flight, for a Move of 20, from backpack-mounted jets. Limitation: Usable only 2 hours per day (-30%). Net cost: 42 points.

Base cost of the suit is 279 points. It is Breakable (DR 15, 50 hits) and easily targeted (-0 to hit), providing a total discount of -40%. This brings the final point cost of the suit down to 168 points.

The IST battlesuit also has the following non-super equipment:

A modified IMI Uzi 9mm submachine gun with a 40-round magazine mounted on each arm; an IMI Eagle .44 Magnum pistol carried on the side; a two-way multi-frequency radio; a flare gun; and a first aid kit.

The armor is light blue in color, with the U.N. logo centered on the chest. Its internal power supply will last for eight hours at full load. It has air tanks and a face mask, good for an hour of air; the suit itself is not airtight or NBC-sealed.

The suit can operate normally for 72 hours at a stretch. None of its systems puts any special load on the power supply, except for the jets. The suit jets are energy hogs; each minute of flight uses up 30 minutes' worth of regular power, so any flight at all shortens rated time dramatically. There is a heads-up display of battery life in the helmet; a buzzer will sound every five minutes for the last 10% of battery life. The batteries will recharge on a standard 110 or 220-volt current. This takes 24 hours.

The wearer must have a Battlesuit skill (see p. B49) of at least 15 in order to competently use the armor. In addition, he must also have Beam Weapons at skill 12 or better to use the Stunner.

Close on the heels of this pronouncement, the U.N. also banned strategic nuclear weapons. The main duty of many of its teams from that point forward, happily supported by almost all the small countries in the U.N., has been the enforcement of strategic nuclear disarmament. Tactical nuclear weapons are frowned upon, but it is the opinion of the Security Council that they should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, rather than with an outright ban. Also, unknown to the world at large, the U.N. possesses a hidden cache of tacnukes.

Despite its draconian measures in 1982, the U.N. remains a relatively benevolent organization. It does not interfere in the day-to-day operations of any member nation's government. Its stated philosophy is libertarian: "The government that governs least governs best." The most overt signs of its growing power are the U.N. International Super Teams permanently emplaced around the globe, one or more in each country.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SUPER TEAMS

The IST forces are the U.N.'s metahuman police squads. Their prime duties are to act as a visible presence of the U.N., to deter (both passively and actively) the creation and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, and to protect human life. IST members are answerable only to the U.N. Security Council, but are encouraged to maintain good working relations with the authorities of the country or countries in which they are based. They are obligated to help the civil authorities in times of natural disaster, if such aid does not interfere with their U.N. duties.

Each IST is composed of at least eight supers, though some have up to 20. Teams are multinational in origin, with a maximum of two natives from the region where the team is stationed. All must speak the language of the host country. Members are selected for skill more than for raw power; each team is assembled so that its members' skills complement each other. Psychological compatibility is also considered, but perfect matches are rare. U.N. psychologists have determined that minor incompatibilities often make for a more effective team!

Some IST members are conscripts from U.N. member nations who draft all metahumans; many others are volunteers. Pay is \$4,000 per month, and team members have all living expenses covered, as well as a generous allowance for uniforms, "public relations" and the like. IST members are also encouraged to continue their educations, either at local universities or by private training, and the U.N. picks up the tab. The U.N. does its best to keep the enthusiastic loyalty of its super-police, and it is, for the most part, successful.

The IST cooperates fully with those members who wish to keep their identities secret, whether to preserve their own privacy or to protect their families from possible retaliation. Such members are known only by their "hero names," and will be provided with masked costumes or even cosmetic changes. Information about the former lives of these supers is available only on a need-to-know basis, and is locked in a single databank at the U.N. headquarters building.

IST members rotate on a three-week-on, one-week-off schedule; each team always has a minimum of six members on duty. IST "embassies" are comfortable, well-equipped, and designed to blend in with their surroundings. For example, IST Tokyo is housed in an ordinary-looking downtown office building, while IST London is based in a Georgian manor. Each embassy is equipped with large scale defenses and limited offensive capability, all powered by a miniature nuclear reactor. In addition to the resident supers, a small force of highly-trained infantry, including a squad with battlesuits, is employed as guards and support crew.

Thus, each embassy is effectively a fortress. All embassy operations are overseen by a high-capacity mainframe computer, EM-shielded and buried in bedrock.

## CONTRACTED TEAMS

The U.N., as of the end of the 1980s, is still using a small number of private teams contracted to help enforce its various edicts. These teams are effectively ISTs, but their contracts will run out sometime between 1992 and 1995, after the last IST embassy has been opened. When their contracts run out, such groups will be given the option to join the IST forces, or to return to civilian status. (PCs who are members of a contracted team when the contract runs out and do not opt to join an IST lose the IST advantage, dropping their value as characters by 65 points!)

## SUPERS IN THE U.S. — THE DMI

In recent years, the U.S. has managed to work around the U.N. ban by establishing a government agency that acts as, among other things, an information clearinghouse for private supergroups. This agency, the Division of Metahuman Information (DMI), provides special security clearances and special law-enforcement powers to approved teams. It also provides access to the national computer database on normal and metahuman criminals, as well as general information databanks. By the terms of its charter, it possesses limited exemption from the Personal Privacy Act. Additionally, the DMI underwrites liability insurance to cover local teams against lawsuits.

To gain DMI privileges, a team must display competence and at least a year's experience, and must have the endorsement of local law enforcement officials. It is estimated that fully  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the U.S.'s private superteams are affiliated with the DMI. Membership is not without its costs, though. What is not made public knowledge (although it is suspected at the U.N.) is that the DMI network is designed to organize and command a large force of supers in a time of need. DMI membership includes an unwritten "We helped you, now you help us" clause.

## THE IST CAMPAIGN

The IST can easily be used as a campaign background: The PCs are members of an IST. They could start out as junior members of a large team at an important "embassy," or they could constitute the whole of an outlying team (Dallas or Anchorage in the U.S., or the capital of any small nation). An IST team always has at least eight members; if there aren't that many players in the campaign, the GM can set up the extra supers as NPCs.

This setting gives the players a lot of leeway in character creation; the supers could come from anywhere in the world. They must all take the IST as a Patron (see sidebar, p. 97), and should all speak the language of their host country (IST would have included this in their enlistment training). It also gives the GM an easy explanation if players come and go; IST often transfers supers between teams (especially the younger ones), both to keep the teams balanced and to give its members a global viewpoint.

An IST group will have its share of "ordinary" crimefighting missions, but there are many other adventure possibilities for the members of a worldwide U.N. force. A few ideas for international adventures are in the sidebars on pp. 100 and 104.

## IST TIMELINE

1953 - 1963

**1953** - USSR explodes H-bomb.

**1954** - First corporate superteam. France loses war for control of Indochina.

**1955** - Warsaw Pact signed. U.S. military advisors first arrive in Vietnam.

**1956** - Martin Luther King, Jr. leads bus boycott in Montgomery, AL due to the arrest of Rosa Parks.

Hungarian revolution put down with troops, tanks, and KGB metahumans.

First serious use of the term "super" in the news media to describe a civic-minded civilian metahuman.

**1957** - First widely known "supers" appear in U.S. and Europe. In the U.S.: Windstorm, X. In Europe: le Chat, Pulsar. U.S. Civil Rights Act is passed. Metahumans aid Federal troops in Little Rock desegregation faceoff.

EEC/Common Market formed by West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. In

response to Soviet Bloc metahuman forces, EEC charter includes the pooling of metahuman resources.

First widely-known civilian meta-villain appears, U.S.

**1958** - Sputnik and Explorer I launched. As a response to the escalating Cold War, both U.S. and Soviets reactivate their national superteams.

First private superteam forms, U.S. First public battle between super-powered hero and villain, West Germany.

**1959** - Several new private supergroups form after public relations success of the American team: Europe, Australia, Japan.

**1960** - U.S. government superteam (current incarnation) makes its first public appearance as such: Quasar I, Darkstorm, X, Blur, and Highball.

First "Powered Adventurers' Corporation" formed, Delaware.

**1961** - Gagarin orbits the Earth. Bay of Pigs invasion succeeds due to exiled Cuban and American metahuman

support, and a pro-U.S. government is seated. As justification, the U.S. points to Soviet nuclear missile sites on the island.

**1962** - U.N. resolution forces U.S. to withdraw from Cuba. Castro and his guerrillas topple the fragile government and re-establish power. The Soviets return and find their missile sites have been wrecked and/or booby-trapped.

**1963** - John F. Kennedy assassinated. X of the U.S. superteam is devastated by his failure to precog this event and commits suicide with his powers.

NAACP recruits a Supers arm in response to a metahuman-aided KKK attack on a Civil Rights march which leaves 15 dead and 179 injured.

Attempted "mind control" smear campaign against the Beatles flounders.

Thunderbird causes a major public outcry when he agrees to appear in a series of Thunderbird automobile commercials. The formation of an independent Metahuman Ethics Committee in the U.S. follows.

*Continued on p. 100*

## IST ADVENTURE SEEDS

**The Rivals.** The U.N. supers must deal with a local metahuman vigilante group whose members want to prove that their city doesn't need "outside" protection. Whenever the IST answers a call, the locals show up, offering unwanted, and possibly dangerous, help. A variation: the interfering supers are local teens, possibly hero-worshipping, and as yet too young to join the IST themselves.

**Sellout.** Several members of the team are posted temporarily to an overseas embassy. The IST there has been decimated by terrorist attacks, and there is reason to believe that there is a traitor . . . possibly even one of the local IST supers!

**New Kid on the Block.** The team must deal with a new member . . . a very powerful, gung-ho young super who has no judgment at all in the use of his abilities.

**Crunchies.** The IST is caught in the crossfire when a Mutants-Are-Evil religious crusade sets off a metahuman backlash, and formerly-responsible supers start talking about "wasting the goddam normals."

**By the Book.** A new IST director has changed the operating regulations by which the super-teams must operate . . . tying their hands . . . and the local metahumans are quick to take advantage.

The DMI does not overtly harass local supers, or even supergroups, who do not choose to join. Rather, it continues to work with them, encouraging them to become part of the system, unless they step over the line and become "public menaces" in the view of the local DMI administrator. At that point, "harassment" is too mild a word for the reaction.

Except for the potential entanglements of the DMI, American superteams have few restrictions. American law gives limited recognition to the extralegal status of powered heroes and affords them some of the same consideration that police officers receive. Unless they are specifically incorporated for profit, monies and equipment gained by superteams are nontaxable. Donations to DMI-approved super-teams are tax-deductible! Likewise, if a hero's identity is a matter of public record and he is a member of a nonprofit supergroup, his income from the group (if any) is nontaxable – to a point.

Some states do require supers to be licensed, especially the more populous states such as New York and New Jersey, and the more conservative states in the South. In addition, individual municipalities may require their own licenses. Those supers who use their powers as an adjunct to a more "normal" career must be specially certified by the appropriate professional group before they can legally practice. This is not always done impartially; for over two decades, the AMA was infamous for flunking young physicians with healing powers, then prosecuting those who tried to help people anyway.

## THE INDEPENDENT METAHUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

This organization was founded in the early Sixties after the popular Amerind super Thunderbird starred in a series of automobile commercials. The manufacturer's sales figures soared through the roof, and Thunderbird received a large fee for his endorsement of the automobile. Unfortunately for Thunderbird, the model he endorsed also reached number one on Ralph

## 1964 - 1971

**1964** – The Jewish Defense League (JDL) establishes a metahuman branch including some former members of the Israeli superteam.

China explodes an A-Bomb and reveals the largest single superteam yet assembled.

**1965** – Vietnam troop buildup includes the stationing of the U.S. superteam and the first active U.S. powered-armor squads.

Watts race riots reveal at least two new metahumans among the rioters.

First major antiwar demonstrations.

**1966** – Surveyor I soft-lands on the Moon.

Race riots in Chicago, Cleveland, and other U.S. cities.

"Cultural Revolution" in China.

**1967** – Increase of antiwar, antidraft, and race demonstrations.

Six-Day War in Middle East. The presence of the Israeli superteam is credited

with significantly shortening what might have become a long, drawn-out conflict.

Race riots in Newark, Detroit, and other cities. Blackstar and Cassius of NAACP superteam die while trying to stop the riots.

Metahuman prankster skywrites "Surrender Dorothy" over L.A. The glowing letters remain in the sky for 36 hours.

**1968** – Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy are both targets of assassination attempts that fail due to their metahuman bodyguards. King is unharmed, but Kennedy suffers severe injury and retires from politics.

Vietnam peace talks.  
Israel attacks Lebanese airport in retaliation for an Arab attack on an El Al jet in Athens; the U.N. Security Council censures Israel by forcing a temporary suspension of the Israeli superteam, which participated in the strike.

**1969** – Armstrong and Aldrin land on the Moon.

Rise of feminism as a political force: Gloria Steinem, Rebecca Ball, metahumans Dreamer and Nightbird.

Metahuman lobbying organization POWER ("Paranormals Only Want Equal Rights") founded in U.S. to counter Nixon administration attempts to require all metahumans to be inducted into the military, and failing that, registered so that the FBI and/or the CIA can keep track of them.

**1970** – U.S. and South Vietnamese troops enter Cambodia.

West Germany and USSR sign nonaggression pact.

Kent State, Ohio. As National Guard troops fire on student demonstrators, two heroes assigned to the Guard (Whipsaw and Slammer) jump in the path of the bullets. Two students are killed, 11 are wounded. Whipsaw in anger kills two of the guardsmen who fired, and is arrested for murder.

**1971** – First appearance of a space-worthy metahuman.

*Continued on p. 102*



Supertemps is the best-known of a number of metahuman "talent agencies." If you have a special problem, Supertemps can usually find a super who has the abilities to help you . . . for a price. The group's files on U.S. and Canadian metahumans are almost as good as the DMI's . . . and probably more confidential.

Supertemps keeps a number of metahumans under contract, either as full-time employees or "on retainer," for recurring jobs. For instance, Flamin' Jane has handled a number of oil-well fires as a Supertemps employee. But with its extensive files, Supertemps often calls a super who has never even thought about working for them, just because his (or her) power is a perfect match for the problem.

Supertemps also acts as a middleman for employers who want to hire full-time supers with specific abilities.

Supertemps is aggressive about marketing its services to both supers and the real world. They have dozens of staffers who do nothing but monitor newspapers and TV, looking for oddball business problems that could be solved by a little super-talent. When they find such a situation, a Supertemps personnel team will start looking for the appropriate super, even before the sales team has closed the contract!

Supertemps also does charity and emergency work. For instance, in 1988, a toddler fell down a well in Texas. While supers from IST Dallas started a tunnel to save her, the Houston office of Supertemps contacted a realtor in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with the (usually useless) power of shrinking his body while retaining his normal strength. Two hours later, the realtor, only a foot tall, was lowered down the well, where he quickly freed the girl, hours before the rescue tunnel would have been finished. Supertemps didn't make a penny off that job, but the publicity was priceless.

The GM can involve Supertemps in a variety of ways. It could be a campaign starter; the PCs could meet for the first time when they were all hired to help on the same job. The PCs can be members of a Supertemps troubleshooting team. Or Supertemps can be used to provide NPCs with special abilities to deal with particular problems. And the campaign newsletter could include ads from Supertemps!

As large corporations go, Supertemps is very ethical. If asked to provide (for instance) a telepath with expertise in investment banking, or a bullet- and radiation-resistant super who spoke Russian, the agency would ask some very careful questions before proceeding.

Supertemps takes care of its own, so it could be a Patron for a super (or a normal) who worked for it. With its financial resources and its quick access to hundreds of supers, Supertemps would be a very powerful Patron, worth a base 30 points.

Nader's "Most Unsafe Autos" list. After a national newsmagazine broke the story on the car, public reaction to Thunderbird virtually wrecked his career as a super and prompted the formation of the Independent Metahuman Ethics Committee.

The Committee, as it is called for short, has no real power save that of public opinion – but this is a strong weapon indeed. Several would-be "heroes" have been thoroughly broken by Committee investigations and recommendations.

The Committee works entirely in the open, meeting in Los Angeles or New York quarterly. Its sessions are open to the public and press, and all materials presented before it are available for the asking. It rarely makes judgments; members simply gather and present evidence for public perusal. Such evidence is gained legally, and is almost certain to be admissible in court; it always has been in the past.

Its membership is composed of ten supers and ten normals who voluntarily serve two years, and then must step down for two years before serving again. No member may choose his successor; new members are selected by the remaining Committee members from the ranks of public and private persons across the country. Members receive no pay, except for a stipend sufficient to pay for transport to and from the quarterly meetings.

## THE REST OF THE WORLD

Elsewhere, the status and treatment of supers varies widely. Unless they are members of a U.N. IST, they are bound by local laws and customs, and in some areas, these can be harsh. Islamic countries, for example, have managed only in the last decade to convince their populations not to slay supers outright as "creatures of Satan." The Israeli ambassador to the U.N. once remarked, "There are only three kinds of metahumans in the Arabic countries: young ones, dead ones, and very, very powerful ones." Up until recently, her remark was all too true; only the most awesome of supers avoided death at the hands of angry mobs. To this day, the population of even the most Westernized Arab nations look upon their supers with distrust.

Oddly enough, the opposite is true in India. Metahuman powers are seen as gifts from the gods. Supers are brought before the priests and welcomed into the Brahmin caste, no matter what their previous station in life had been – even Untouchable. They are showered with gifts and supported by the people around them, in exchange for blessing the people with their presence and service. No

## WELL-KNOWN SUPERS

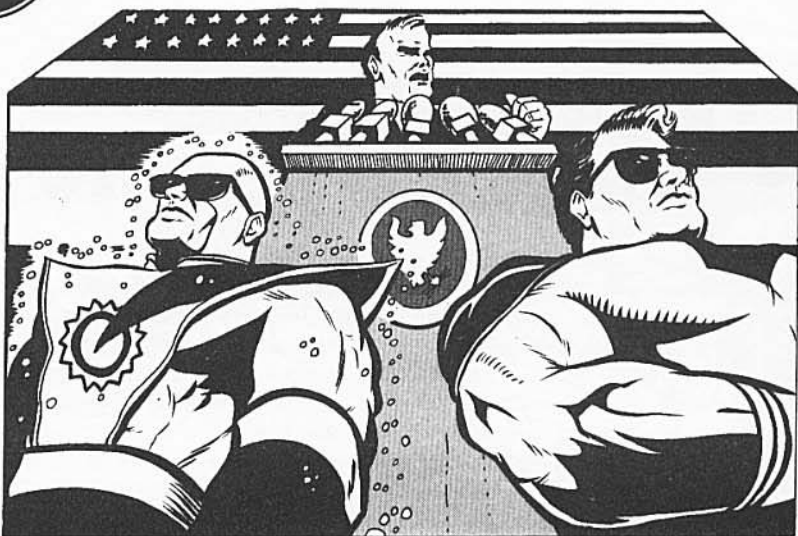
**Witchwind** – One of the more powerful recent weather manipulators, Witchwind can also fly on the winds she controls. Her nationality is unknown, but she is currently a member of IST Lisbon.

**Macavity** – A criminal genius who haunts the back streets of London. Macavity has been known to fly and teleport, and seems to possess the ability to influence the minds of those around him.

**La Fusionne** – The newest heroine to appear in Paris, la Fusionne is an insubstantial creature of energy, apparently able to tap into the local power grid to fuel her hefty energy bolts and flight. Unknown even to the U.N., la Fusionne is a composite being generated by the U.N.'s experimental AI computer, the MV-2400, and its creator, Dr. Nathalie Chaumont.

**Void** – A Spanish-born villainess, now a naturalized British citizen. She appears to be a humanoid black hole when she so wishes. She is suspected of having absorbed seven people (now assumed dead), and is known to be a paranoid psychotic.

*Continued on next page . . .*



small number of them also work for the stupendous Indian film industry, providing both protagonists and special effects for the movie-mills.

Beyond the Iron Curtain, those supers who are not conscripted for the U.N. are officially distributed to collective farms and towns across the Soviet Union. Theoretically, this ensures the maximum number of supers serving Russian citizens. Of course, the permitted bodyguard squads are maintained in Moscow. Until Gorbachev's reforms in 1988-89, though, generals and high-ranking KGB officials maintained their own private teams of supers under this guise. These private squads were used to spy upon the West and each other, and on occasion, for assassination.

Red China, on the other hand, has been exemplary in its obedience to the U.N. rulings. Its massive supers battalions were split up into small groups

## 1972 - 1979

**1972** – Whipsaw convicted of two counts of manslaughter and is sentenced to two concurrent 15-year terms in jail, to start in 1973. Meanwhile, the Kent State National Guardsmen (those who survived Whipsaw) are convicted of second-degree murder.

Martin Luther King, Jr. elected to U.S. Senate on the Democratic ticket. Nixon administration takes a more antagonistic stand toward metahumans, especially those who publicly oppose the President. The U.S. Bonded Telepaths' Organization and POWER manage to defuse most attempts to restrict metahumans and their rights, but the FBI maintains surveillance on the more outspoken heroes.

**1973** – Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark join the EEC. Britain and Ireland politely ignore the EEC metahuman pooling policy. Watergate scandal in U.S.

Ceasefires signed with North Vietnamese by South Vietnamese and the U.S.

Drought-induced famine cripples much of West Africa, despite efforts by local metahuman weather manipulators.

Prompted by Bonded Telepaths' Organization branches, several European countries pass "Right to Privacy" laws.

**1974** – Nixon resigns and is succeeded by Gerald Ford, who pardons the ex-president.

United States' Personal Privacy Act signed into law. Telepathic invasion without cause (usually, parental permission, a search warrant, or medical necessity) is prohibited.

**1975** – South Vietnam falls; the war in Vietnam ends.

Egypt and Israel sign Sinai disengagement pact.

**1976** – American Bicentennial and Exposition. The pavilion on American metahumans proves the most popular of

the entire exposition, with guest appearances by the American superteam and foreign metahumans as well.

Carter elected President of U.S.

**1977** – Extremist Moslem groups bomb theaters in Egypt and other Arab countries to protest secular values. They begin to display metahumans among their ranks, of impressive power but with little training or skill.

Gadafi's power grows in Libya.

Gandhi government in India ousted by devout Hindu/Moslem coalition.

**1978** – Genetic research begins to show some progress into the "how" of metahuman powers.

**1979** – Three Mile Island nuclear accident quickly and efficiently handled by the U.S. superteam.

*Continued on p. 103*



assigned to civilian authorities in each province. Of course, the civilian authorities themselves are still answerable to the central committee and the chairman, so the distributed teams can still be called up as a military force if need be. But their widespread distribution makes this no more a threat than the raising of a conventional army.

The Soviet Union and Red China both require newly manifested supers to register with the government and undergo military training similar to, but more intensive than, that undergone by most ordinary citizens.

Several South American countries have actually been ruled by supers in the last four decades. When the political structure is as rigid and repressive as many Latin dictatorships, it is not uncommon for the native supers to either incorporate themselves into the structure or become its worst enemies. Several revolutions and coups have been led by a super or group of supers, who then kept power for themselves. In recent years, some Latin governments have taken to killing supers who may grow too powerful to be controlled.

In Africa, conditions vary greatly. Outside of South Africa and its satellites, metahumans are regarded with awe by the population, and as either a resource or a threat by governments. Those African governments in the U.N. must maintain at least a tacit support of metahumans, but it is not uncommon, as in Latin America, for the most powerful to be killed if they cannot be made to serve.

South Africa distinguishes itself by its program of genetic testing. Once the discovery of the genes for paranormal powers was announced in 1986, South Africa began testing its populations for super potential. White supers are provided with extensive training and the finest things in life, and are heavily publicized by the government-owned media. There are no black supers in South Africa, according to official government reports. Pretoria claims that none manifest themselves in the Kaffir population. Some experts not affiliated with the white minority government claim that black and "coloured" children are screened for potential powers, and those that test positive are killed outright. Those that escape screening are declared outlaws with bounties on their heads

## WELL-KNOWN SUPERS (CONTINUED)

**The Red Knight** – The defender of Moscow. The Red Knight is the second to bear the name, and until Gorbachev began his reforms, he was the nightmare of the corrupt commissar. A short-range psi with a substantial knowledge of the ways of the Russian government, he prowls the Kremlin, catching and exposing those officials who betray their trust as members of the Communist Party.

**Quasar** – A New Jersey-based energy elemental. Quasar absorbs, retains, and re-emits all electromagnetic energies. He also flies and has limited illusion powers. He is currently a member of IST New York.

**Nightscream** – Clothed entirely in black, this heroine moves silently and is capable of a massive sonic attack. She appears strong enough to carry half a ton of weight as well.

**Kristallnacht** – The single most feared member of the PLO, he is a neo-Nazi working with the Palestinians for thrills. He is able to conjure razor-sharp shards of glass and project them in a deadly jet. He wears light body armor and often carries "normal" weapons to deal with foes who can withstand his super-attack.

## IST TIMELINE

Egypt and Israel sign peace treaty.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Soviets ignore U.N. protests, which prompts new discussion (started by smaller and weaker countries) on the need for a permanent U.N. metahuman "police force," even as such a force is secretly recruited for the Afghan campaign.

**1980** – Iranian militants take 55 U.S. Embassy staff hostage in Tehran. Fast action by the U.S. superteam rescues most hostages (five die, shot before team members can intervene).

Anti-nuclear movement born in Western Europe. Included in the movement is a small anti-metahuman element.

Olympics boycotted by U.S. over invasion of Afghanistan.

In a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that the right of the individual to his privacy granted by the 1974 Personal Privacy Act outweighs the government's "need to

know." "Mental search warrants" are now outlawed.

U.N. organizes and deploys covert superteam to fight Russian incursion into Afghanistan.

**1981** – Anwar Sadat assassinated by a bomb that also kills his metahuman bodyguards.

U.S. jets shoot down two Libyan metahumans after the two attack the jets over the Gulf, seriously damaging one aircraft.

Greece joins the EEC. Its national superteam joins the EEC metahuman team, making it second only to Red China's team in size.

**1982** – Leonid Brezhnev dies; he is replaced by Yuri Andropov.

U.S. President Carter embargoes Libyan oil due to their alleged support of terrorist activities.

First bionic limb, a leg, is constructed.

It is little more than a motorized prosthesis with neural sensors.

U.N. bans both national superteams and strategic nuclear weaponry. It unveils its collected metahuman forces in order to make the ban stick.

U.N. IST forces make their debut, and five teams are emplaced. Complete deployment is expected by 1992.

**1983** – American Marine headquarters in Beirut destroyed by a bomb. 245 die, one Marine survives – a metahuman created in the conflagration.

**1984** – Ronald Reagan wins U.S. presidential election.

Andropov dies; he is replaced by Constantine Chernenko.

Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India leaks deadly gas, killing over 2,500 persons and mutating at least a dozen.

*Continued on p. 105*

## OVERSEAS IST ADVENTURE SEEDS

*That Old Black Magic.* The team assigned to an Arabian sheikhdom is ordered not to take sides when a relative of the King launches his own bid for the throne. Then they learn that the insurgent Prince is himself a metahuman, with infernal powers. Will they break the rules and act covertly to stop the revolution – or let him win and deal with his demonic masters later?

*No Bull!* John Bull is the metahuman commander of the Buckingham Palace Guards. He is one of the toughest men in the world; in 1944, he airdropped into occupied France without a parachute, and he looks perhaps half his true age of 60. Now he's vanished. IST London is asked to investigate.



*Color Bar.* In Africa, an IST group must deal with a super-refugee from South Africa. He was a member of the white ruling class, with transformation power, flight, and blaster abilities – very powerful. The catch? His flight and blasting powers only work in his Transformed state . . . which is black . . . and he was eventually unmasked and chased out of the country. He's a basically good person, with some real psychological problems and a South African super-assassin on his trail.

*Out of the Deep.* Something seems to be eating the Danish and Norwegian fishing fleets. The ISTs of both nations are asked to investigate.

*U.N., Go Home!* The dictator of Paraguay, himself a metahuman, has announced that he is pulling out of the U.N. He has given the IST one week to get out of Asunción. The supers of the team are ordered to take that week to find out what the dictator is up to!

*Sucker Punch.* Tonga, an island kingdom, is the site of the newest U.N. super-team: IST Nuku'alofa. Two days before its official opening, the embassy building is destroyed by a tactical nuke! Many lives are lost. Who has the illegal nuclear devices, and why did they attack a peaceful and out-of-the-way site like Tonga?

when their powers manifest; the media is forbidden to mention their existence. As an additional datum, no non-white metahuman has ever received a visa to visit South Africa.

Japan has incorporated supers into its highly-structured society with great success. As with normals, the number of Japanese super-criminals is very, very low. Most supers are given places in the high-status corporate superteams. Others go into the entertainment industry – the Japanese are famous (or infamous) for capitalizing on their metahumans. Television shows, movies, and *manga* (Japanese comics) are produced in floods, all about their supers. More than a few Western supers, with dreams of fame, have come to Japan to get parts in Japanese productions. As a result, some of the best-known supers in the world are Japanese, regardless of their actual power and skill.

In Europe, the super is currently the epitome of *chic*, and has been for nearly a decade. Fashions based on the clothing of costumed heroes are popular, and light capes (occasionally with cowls) are a fashion trend which is beginning to make its appearance in the United States. Whole gossip pages in newspapers are dedicated to the doings of metahumans, and an unexpected public appearance by one is grounds for a mob scene rivalled only by those at soccer games.

The European public loves its heroes – and sometimes its villains, if they show style. Some criminals, such as le Chat Noir of France, are cult figures for their flamboyance and their refusal to cause serious harm to persons or property. (Others like le Mangonel, though, are despised for their insensitivity to human life and are doggedly hunted.) The public support and acclaim given to so-called “gentle” supervillains is such that more than one young person with minor powers has used crime as a springboard into an entertainment career after “going straight.” London tabloids have featured voluptuous supervillain lovelies as their Page Three Girls, staunchly defending their models’ identities against the police.

The governments of Europe are almost as entranced by supers as the people. Heroes are given as much government backing as the U.N. will allow, and paranormal research is flooded with grants. Damage from super-battles is taken care of by the government. Most of this official enthusiasm is a holdover from the days of nuclear threat, when the EEC superteam was seen to be the last hope Europe had of surviving any conflict. Even with the team disbanded under the U.N. ban, and the threat of nuclear destruction virtually gone, the various governments still vie for the goodwill of as many metahumans (both public and private) as they can.

## SUPERTEAMS

While many supers work solo, it is more common for two or more to band together into a team. Sometimes this is for increased power and certainty of victory, as with the U.N. IST teams. Other teams arise as social organizations first – supers like the company of their own kind, since no one else can really understand their lives! Others are paramilitary adjuncts of the security divisions of major corporations. Still others are metahuman arms for special-interest groups like the NAACP or the JDL.

No matter what their origins, though, most private teams are incorporated for the legal and financial protection that incorporation brings. Others obtain corporate sponsorship, or actually become branches of major corporations, effectively becoming a division of corporate security. It is not unknown to find a team that is completely informal and unfunded – but it is rare. The legal and financial needs of the average supergroup can be great.

## THE MILITARY TEAM

These are technically non-existent since the 1982 U.N. Ban. It is an open secret that some member nations still maintain their military supers under other guises. Also, non-member nations such as Libya and Taiwan and groups like the PLO have their own squads of metahuman soldiers. Dealing with these is another task assigned to IST forces.

Military teams tend to be selected and trained for sheer firepower. Where possible, high-capacity teleporters are included in such teams to provide instant shock-troop capability. Some teams, like the PLO's, have never seen "normal" combat, but instead specialize in terrorist and guerrilla action. Members of such teams are also encouraged to make use of their training and gifts on their own time, if they should so desire. The prime example of this policy is the PLO metahuman Kristallnacht's solo raids on Israeli targets.

## THE CORPORATE TEAM

These groups come in two varieties: company security and public relations. Sometimes the two are the same; otherwise, the public rarely sees the security teams, who are nearly as dangerous as the military teams of the past and present. It has been rumored that several corporations exploiting the resources of the Amazon basin have fought an outright super war in the South American jungles.

The PR team, on the other hand, is often friendly to the point of cuddliness. Constantly on loan to local law enforcement agencies, these supers earn their keep by providing a good image for their parent company. Naturally, they are often the targets for exposés and embarrassing questions at news conferences.

Well-known corporate teams include those of the Texxon Corp., Multinational Business Equipment, and Citrix GmbH.

## SUPERS AND POP CULTURE

The influence of the super on pop culture has been perhaps greater than on any other level. The "return" of powerful, near-mythic figures has had a deep-seated appeal to almost all people. Not everyone loves the supers – when there is something great and inspiring, there will always be someone to deride and attack it. But for the most part, pop culture has treated the super with lavish affection.

Comic books ceased to be totally fictional, as companies scrambled to get the rights to the supers' names and stories. At this date, the "Big Four" – National Periodicals, Fawcett, Charleston, and Marvel – share a multimillion-dollar industry that has made them financial giants. They now own movie studios, newspapers, and television stations, and supers are lovingly covered by all.

Stage and screen (both large and small) have seen their share of metahumans as well. Supers may not come cheap, but they bring their own special effects! Many a movie has saved several million dollars on opticals and wire harnesses by hiring a flying super. Metahuman doubles are in great demand for "impossibly" dangerous stunts.

Television, of course, has depicted the super in shows that range from silly sitcoms (*Psi In The House*, ABC, 1972-1976) to award-winning documentaries (*And The World Turned Upside-Down*, PBS, 1982). As time went on, of course, the super in the show stopped being a gimmick or a stereotype, and turned into a real person like the lovable, naïve telepath Radar in *M\*A\*S\*H* (CBS, 1971-1990).

Continued on next page . . .

## IST TIMELINE

**1985** – Chernenko dies; he is replaced by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Terrorist airport attacks, Rome and Vienna. The Vienna attack is performed by an energy-projecting super.

Attempted overthrow of South African government by an "impromptu" multinational black African superteam fails. The slaughter of the black forces by the South African superteam shocks the world, and their subsequent bloody incursion into Angola almost plunges all of southern Africa into war. The U.N. intervenes, but its African IST forces are barely sufficient to turn back the South African team. Western European governments impose sanctions on South Africa.

Chernobyl accident, Soviet Union. USSR combines cleanup attempt with massive screening of exposed population for newly created "accidental" supers, but does not announce results of the search.

**1986** – Challenger disaster, Cape Kennedy, Florida, U.S.

Announcement of positive identification of "power" genes in metahumans. Also identified are the genes for human intelligence – and that they are mingled in the same portions of DNA as the "power" genes; in fact, they are inextricably mixed with them. The philosophical and religious implications of this discovery rock the globe.

South Africa begins genetic screening of all newborns.

**1987** – U.S. government secretly begins program to design and build a bomber that is undetectable by either psi or radar.

**1988** – In a move to firmly establish *glasnost* and goodwill, Mikhail Gorbachev offers to disband "unofficial" Soviet military superteams if the U.S. will do the same.

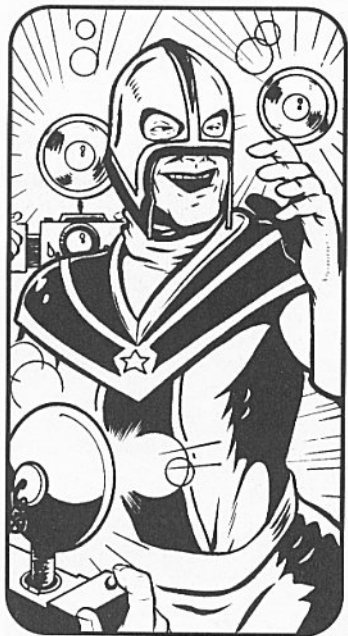
Senator Martin Luther King, Jr. and his running mate, Michael Dukakis, defeat Ronald Reagan in his bid for re-election. King appoints his right-hand man, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, to the post of Secretary of HEW.

Continued on p. 107

## SUPERS AND POP CULTURE (CONTINUED)

Literature has been cautious about the metahuman phenomenon up until recently, save for histories and a few ideological works. Only science fiction seems to have dealt adequately with the super . . . and with the public's thirst for anything having to do with supers, SF was dragged out of the ghetto it was shoved into 50 years ago. For 47 weeks in 1988, the top books on the *New York Times* Best Sellers List were SF or otherwise supers-linked. Now with the publication of Tom Wolfe's history *Gods Among Us* in January 1989, another literary fad for metahumans began.

Sports have not been heavily affected by the metahuman phenomenon, simply because all sports organizations have prohibited "super" participation in anything but displays. From time to time, rumors surface about especially talented performers, and the Olympic Committee has announced that participants in the next Olympiad will have to undergo genetic screening. Of course, exhibitions of super running, gymnastics, and so on are common. In 1987, nine metahuman athletes formed a baseball team, the New York Supers, for a charity exhibition game the week after the World Series. To a full stadium, the world champion Houston Astros beat the Supers, 9-7. (After the game, the Supers coach commented that he should have gone for speed and coordination rather than strength.)



## THE PRIVATE TEAM

The private team is what most people think of when they hear the term "supergroup." Only a few large corporations have the resources to fund their own groups, and military teams have good reason to stay out of sight, so groups of local heroes are more visible and numerous. Those with a good track record of captures and minimal property damage are often heartily welcomed by their chosen municipalities. Others may have difficulties: special licenses, anti-super zoning, heavy taxes, and outright abuse from local officials. Some teams choose secrecy, either to avoid local officials or to be more effective at hunting criminals.

## SPECIAL INTEREST TEAMS

This covers all groups of supers allied as a result of similar social or political beliefs. Most of these are supported by organizations of the same bent. These teams perform public relations tasks for their parent organizations, and also act as well-publicized muscle for the particular beliefs that they espouse.

Many such teams and their members are nationally known. Some, such as the NAACP and JDL's supers arms (both lacking special names) are almost universally respected and tend to be filled with well-educated, well-spoken representatives. Others, like the White Knights of the Double Lightning Strike of the KKK, are wanted by authorities. Some groups are small and receive no attention, and like it that way. One example is the Gay Urban Task Force, whose primary goal is to catch and deter gay-bashing bigots in New York.

## OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

### BONDED TELEPATHS' ORGANIZATION

In 1952, the British legal system was rocked to its very foundations when an independent team of heroes revealed that several British judges were under mental domination by hostile telepaths. The judges were being manipulated into dismissing court cases and ruling in favor of dubious defendants. The British "Mind Control Scandal" nearly started a pogrom against telepaths across Europe; several similar, though smaller, plots in the United States did result in witch hunts, particularly in the South.

Across Europe, many ethical telepaths were disturbed at the implications that the scandal held for them and for society in general. With the heroes of the British scandal, they approached selected politicians with the idea of a self-policing telepaths' organization, in which each member was bonded, with a financial stake in ethical telepathic dealings. With the help of these politicians, plus several highly-placed contacts in Parliament and other governing bodies, this "telepaths' union" was given a trial run in England at protecting British courts from telepathic intrusion.

It was not very long before the bonded telepaths stationed in courtrooms around England were requested to enter the legal process itself. After the groundbreaking case of *Melville vs. Curtis*, Parliament was forced to consider the implications of telepaths as tools of the court. It responded by creating the three-telepath system (see sidebar, p. 107), and effectively incorporated the Bonded Telepaths' Organization of the United Kingdom into the British Civil Service.

The BTO's success in both England and later in the United States attracted great public interest and support. By the mid-1960s, the BTO had established itself not only as a responsible "business" organization, but also as a lobbying group of no small clout. Along with the short-lived POWER coalition, the U.S. BTO disarmed the Nixon administration's paranoid anti-supers plans. It still maintains a vigorous presence in Washington, as well as in other capitals across the world, not to mention the U.N. in New York.



## PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES INSTITUTE (PSI)

The Parapsychological Studies Institute is the brainchild of Dr. J. B. Rhine, who left Duke University to found the Institute in 1953. Based in Delaware, PSI has branches across the U.S., as well as in England, France, and Germany. Several more are being built in Japan and the Soviet Union.

PSI's main purpose is the discovery and training of the psionically-gifted, as well as research into psionic abilities. An accredited post-graduate institution, PSI houses many different divisions, exploring all facets of modern scientific knowledge in its search to understand psi phenomena.

The Institute has strong ties to both the BTO and to the U.N.; many research projects on metahuman mechanisms are awarded to PSI. The Institute is financially independent, due to research grants and royalties on its dozens of patents.

Graduates of PSI are rarely found among the flamboyant ranks of the metahuman heroes. Instead, they are consultants, researchers, and occasionally civil servants. One goal of the Institute is to make psi abilities seem as normal as possible. To this end it inculcates (some say indoctrinates) its staff and students with the virtue of inconspicuousness. And, surprising as it may seem, PSI has often been on the side of attempts to limit or ban private superteams, on the grounds that such use of metahuman powers is nothing more than grandstanding, and hinders the eventual acceptance of such powers as a norm.

## THE "THREE-TELEPATH SYSTEM"

The "Three-Telepath System," as defined by British law and later adopted by the United States, attempts to address the inherent unreliability of the testimony of telepaths. It solves the problem of potential misrepresentation by the telepath by requiring *three* telepaths when any mental scanning is required. One telepath each is used by defense and prosecution; a third is consulted only by the judge and acts as a disinterested third party.

Testimony based on telepathic evidence is first presented only to the judge, in writing. The judge examines the three accounts; if they differ in any but the most inconsequential details, the testimony is thrown out and the telepaths dismissed. Testimony which correlates across all three telepathic reports is subsequently presented in normal fashion in the open court. All witnesses in a case must be scanned if telepathic cross-examination is used; if any refuse, the telepathic evidence is thrown out. No one is ever scanned against his will.

It should be noted that certain other countries, especially dictatorships, routinely use telepathic interrogation, both in courts and in less formal sessions!

## 1ST TIMELINE

**1939** - Attempted assassination of President King at his inauguration by the White Wizard of the KKK. The White Wizard is immediately flamed by Secret Service metahumans and dies in seconds.

U.S. researchers report success in cold (room temperature) fusion experiments.

Canadian IST forces contain oil spilled into Alaskan waters by a crippled Texxon tanker.

**1990** - U.S. Government project to develop a psi- and radar-invisible warplane is scrapped with the end of the Cold War.

Regular Earth-Myr trading route begins, using Meeranar ships.

Rumanian civil war ends in March as rebels capture the last supers and secret police loyal to the Ceausescu government.

Alleged Libyan chemical weapons plant explodes; Qaddafi accuses Israeli agents in an impassioned speech, but stops short of declaring outright war.

Albanian and Iranian earthquakes; in both cases, the Blue Demon appears shortly afterward.

Fidel Castro begins making increasingly apocalyptic speeches against the U.S. and U.N.

PLD tacnukes West Bank settlements

in retaliation for the murder of eight Palestinians by a crazed Israeli gunman.

Roger Waters performs *The Wall* in Berlin. The all-star cast includes Songbird of IST Bonn and Doreen "The Seductress" Kano.

Iraq invades and annexes Kuwait. The U.N. votes sanctions against Iraq and shuts down fusion plants in both countries. When troops are not withdrawn, international force is assembled and deployed, liberating Kuwait. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is taken into custody by members of IST Baghdad.

*To be continued?!*

1989 - 1990

# AMAZING HEROES

WITH HEARTS OF GOLD

**T** HIS CHAPTER PRESENTS EIGHT HEROES FROM THE CAMPAIGN WORLD DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 7. SOME OF THEM ARE MEMBERS OF THE U.N.'S METAHUMAN POLICE FORCE, THE IST (INTERNATIONAL SUPER TEAMS). OTHERS ARE INDEPENDENTS OR VIGILANTES.

EACH DESCRIPTION INCLUDES BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS, CHARACTER STATISTICS, SUPER-ABILITIES, GOALS AND PERSONALITIES, AND A TYPICAL BIT OF FOUR-COLOR DIALOGUE. ANY OF THESE SUPERS COULD BE USED AS EITHER A PLAYER CHARACTER OR AN NPC. SOME OF THEM WILL BE SEEN AGAIN IN LATER ADVENTURES OR SOURCEBOOKS! OF COURSE, THE GM IS FREE TO CHANGE THE NAME AND THE DETAILS OF THE ABILITIES, AND TO USE ANY OF THESE DESIGNS FOR SUPER-CRIMINALS.

ALL THE HEROES PRESENTED HERE ARE BUILT ON 500 TO 600 POINTS, FOR A "FOUR-COLOR" CAMPAIGN. SINCE THE UNUSUAL BACKGROUND COST TO BE A SUPER DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THE GM AND THE INDIVIDUAL CAMPAIGN, NONE OF THESE SAMPLE CHARACTERS HAS ANY UNUSUAL BACKGROUND COST. IN A CAMPAIGN WHERE ALL THE PCS ARE SUPER, THERE IS NO NEED TO ADD AN UNUSUAL BACKGROUND COST AT ALL. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN A CAMPAIGN SUCH AS THE IST WORLD, MANY PCS MIGHT BE SUPER NORMALS OR NORMALS, A 50-POINT UNUSUAL BACKGROUND COST IS APPROPRIATE. (THE EXCEPTION IS THE FOX, A SUPER NORMAL WITH NO METAHUMAN ABILITIES. HE WOULD HAVE NO UNUSUAL BACKGROUND COST IN ANY CAMPAIGN.)



# BLACK PEARL

Age 26; 5'6"; 130 lbs. An African-American woman, dressed in a one-piece bathing suit and skin-tight boots and gloves, white and patterned in scales. She wears her hair medium-length, usually with seaweed woven into it.

**ST:** 10 [-]      **IQ:** 16 [80]      **Speed:** 6.5  
**DX:** 13 [30]      **HT:** 13 [30]      **Move:** 6 running;  
48 swimming

**Dodge:** 7      **Parry:** 7  
**Damage:** Karate Punch 1d-2, Kick 1d; Thrust: 1d-2; Swing: 1d

## ADVANTAGES

Absolute Direction [5]; Acute Hearing +2 [4]; Alertness +5 [25]; Appearance: Beautiful [15]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Danger Sense [15]; Rapid Healing [5]; IST Membership (Rank 4) [85].

## DISADVANTAGES

Bad Sight (wears contacts) [-10]; Honesty [-10]; Sense of Duty: To everyone she perceives as just and good [-10]; Sense of Duty: To rehabilitate Mount Fuji [-5]; Truthfulness [-5].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Amphibious [10]; Dark Vision [25]; Gills [10]; Nictating Membrane [10]; Pressure Support [15]; Regrowth [40]; Speak with Fish [10]; Super Swimming  $\times 3$  [30].

## SUPER DISADVANTAGES

4 levels of Vulnerability to Heat/Fire attacks [-40].

## QUIRKS

Profound distaste for sushi bars; Tries to work within "the system" whenever possible; Proud of her parents and wants to emulate them; Doesn't care for traditional pets like cats and dogs; Wears seaweed in her dreadlocks. [-5]

## SKILLS

Agronomy (Marine) [2]-16; Area Knowledge (Ocean) [4]-18; Botany [2]-15; Chemistry [2]-15; Computer Operation [1]-16; Computer Programming [1]-14; Dancing [4]-14; Detect Lies [1]-14; Ecology [4]-16; Japanese [2]-15; Karate [4]-13; Meteorology [1]-15; Naturalist [1]-14; Stealth [2]-13.

## SUPER-POWERS

Control Fish (Area Effect +50%, Increased Area  $\times 10$  +200%, Movable Area +40%, total 13-hex radius) [67]-16(15); Sense Fish (Increased Area +20% for a 5-mile radius) [28]-15(20).

Pearl Moore is the daughter of two prominent marine biologists, David and Beth Moore. They were researchers at an

**TOTAL POINTS:**  
**500**



underwater laboratory, where David specialized in marine ecosystems while Beth pursued cetacean research.

It was while working here that they discovered that Beth was pregnant with their first child. They learned almost simultaneously that the child would be a girl and that she had a rare and fatal genetic disorder that would impair the growth of her lungs. The fetus was otherwise developing normally, so they decided to try an experimental treatment that showed some promise for correcting the disorder.

The surgery was successful, but had surprising side effects. Pearl was born with healthy lungs – that also had the ability to breathe underwater! After the shock of discovering this while Pearl was taking a bath, her parents decided to keep it a secret – they wanted Pearl to have as normal a childhood as possible. They also feared that someone might try to take her away from them either for research or to use her abilities unscrupulously.

Her parents' care and love helped her both develop her powers and develop as a person. She left for school as a mostly-normal, well-adjusted young woman.

While Pearl was attending college her parents were killed in an attack by industrial saboteurs on their laboratory. Ironically, the killers were trying to prevent the development of techniques to create amphibious human beings.

Pearl vowed to catch the criminals – and succeeded, capturing the leaders of the organization and turning them over to the police. This brought her abilities to the attention of the IST. She joined their ranks immediately after her graduation and is a highly-respected member of IST Tokyo, where she does marine biology research and tries to rehabilitate Mount Fuji in her off-time. Pearl is not a super-fighter by any stretch of the imagination, but she is one of the IST's most valuable resources when investigating marine-based criminal activities.

*Typical Dialogue:* "There's something fishy going on here!"

# DWARFSTAR

TOTAL POINTS:  
500



Age 45; 3'4"; 730 lbs. Suntanned, with dark hair kept back in a ponytail. He wears a yellow-and-black costume with a white-and-black sunburst on his right breast.

**ST:** 100 [210]    **IQ:** 14 [45]    **Speed:** 7  
**DX:** 15 [60]    **HT:** 13 [30]    **Move:** 6  
**Dodge:** 6  
**Damage:** Thrust: 11d; Swing: 13d

## ADVANTAGES

Alertness +1 [5]; Attractive [5]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Legal Enforcement Powers – DMI [5].

## DISADVANTAGES

Dwarfism [-15]; Compulsive Gambler [-10]; Lecherousness [-15]; Truthfulness [-5]; Dependent: 25 points, 12 or less [-24].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Clinging [25]; 6 levels Increased Density [30]; DR 6 against crushing damage [0 points, Increased Density]; Pressure Support [15].

## QUIRKS

Carries a surfboard on the beach, but doesn't surf; Takes sandcourt volleyball *very* seriously; Calls bodybuilders "effete twerps"; Shows off by juggling bowling balls; Likes tall women – the taller, the better. [-5]

## SKILLS

Astronomy [12]-18; Acrobatics [8]-16; Brawling [8]-18; Carousing [4]-14; Computer Operation [2]-15; Criminology [4]-15; Gambling [12]-19; Photography [4]-15; Sex Appeal [4]-14.

## SUPER-POWERS

Increase Density [76]-16(15).

Jacob Keller was born October 12, 1955 in Portsmouth, Indiana. His parents owned a small farm, and Jacob was the seventh of 11 children. Jacob, born a dwarf, left home when he was 16 to join the circus as an acrobat and clown.

Jacob (or "Bouncin' Jack," as his circus family called him) spent the next ten years under the big top – but he had higher aspirations. As long as he could remember, Jack had been fascinated by astronomy. He spent many nights lying out in the fields after the midway had been shut down, dreaming of the stars, and of the mysteries that must be hidden on the surface of other planets.

During his decade with the show, Jack read everything he could get his hands on, saved his money diligently, and ran an after-hours dice game. Finally, in 1981, he had enough money to enroll at UCLA as an astrophysics major.



Jack spent the next six years earning his Bachelor's and Master's degrees, working out with the gymnastics team, and running

his dice game in the gym on weekends. He contacted his parents, whom he hadn't seen in years, and promised his mother to write more often.

In the fall of 1988, he began work on his doctorate, and immersed himself in the study of white dwarfs, the ultra-dense collapsed stars that had been his obsession since his sophomore year. He designed an experiment intended to briefly duplicate the incredible powers of the star in controlled conditions – but something went wrong.

When power was shunted into his device from the campus nuclear reactor, the resulting field was far beyond anything expected. The device imploded, then reversed itself as the power connection was broken. Jack was bombarded with gravitational energies never before experienced by man.

When he came to, Jack was amazed that he was still alive. He spent the next three days in the hospital as doctors ran a battery of tests on him. While playing with a bowl of pudding, Jack discovered that his metahuman genes had been activated – he could now increase the density of any object. Several other abilities emerged as he trained.

Jack assumed the name Dwarfstar and is now a member of a DMI-approved super-team in Malibu, where he fights villains with a theatrical flair that has made him the darling of both the media and the hero groupies in the beach area. The location allows him to pursue bad guys, good volleyball, and tall women – not necessarily in that order. He is currently living with Angie De'Oro, a freshman dance major who is constantly underfoot (see Disadvantages).

*Typical Dialogue:* "What are you, dense? Well, you are now!"



# FLAMIN' JANE

Age 42; 5' 11"; 150 lbs. A natural redhead, in a costume of red, orange, and deep gray, almost black. She has brilliant green eyes normally, but in her Body of Flame form, they flicker from yellow to orange to red.

**ST:** 10 [-]      **IQ:** 14 [45]      **Speed:** 7  
**DX:** 15 [60]      **HT:** 13 [30]      **Move:** 7 running,  
56 (115 mph) flying

**Dodge:** 7  
**Damage:** *Fireball* 6d; *Flame Jet*, 8d impaling;  
*Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d

## ADVANTAGES

Appearance: Very Beautiful [25]; Intuition [15]; Strong Will +4 [16].

## DISADVANTAGES

Honesty [-10]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Lecherousness [-15]; Pacifism: Cannot Kill [-15]; Secret Identity [-10]; Stubbornness [-5]; Truthfulness [-5].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

10 levels of Body of Fire (Only When Flying -30%) [35]; Costume [15]; Damage Resistance +10 [30]; Flight [40]; Super Flight  $\times 2$  [40].

## SUPER DISADVANTAGES

1d Vulnerability to Cold/Ice attacks [-10].

## QUIRKS

Likes pistachio ice cream; Dislikes being called "Red"; Wants to go into acting eventually; Can't stand to sleep past 5:30 a.m.; Drives her Jaguar too fast. [-5]

## SKILLS

Accounting [6]-15; Computer Operation [2]-15; Dancing [2]-15; Driving (Car) [2]-15; Economics [6]-15; Investment Banking (M/H) [10]-17; Sex Appeal [12]-18; Swimming [1]-15; Whip [1]-14.

## SUPER-POWERS

Fireball (Rapid Fire  $\times 2$  +80%, Homing  $\times 3$  +150%) [123]-14(6); Flame Jet (Impaling +40%, Hotshotted +30%) [90]-15(8); Neutralize Fire (Increased Area  $\times 2$  +40%) [29]-12(10); Smoke (Increased Area  $\times 3$  +60%) [50]-13(10).

Sarah Jane Dailey was born February 12, 1958 to a wealthy Connecticut family. When Sarah was five years old her mother died in a car accident. Her father never remarried, but employed a nanny to help rear Sarah. Though her father

**TOTAL POINTS:**  
**600**



was often away on business trips, Sarah grew up happy with Mrs. McAllister.

Sarah did reasonably well in school, though she was always more interested in boys than academics. Her powers manifested at the onset of puberty, all within the space of a year. Mrs. McAllister found her one day in the back yard, experimenting with her new-found abilities. She wasted no time in sitting down with Sarah to explain how she was gifted, and must use those gifts to help people. She also told Sarah that people would not treat her like others if they knew she was different.

In high school Sarah realized that her looks weren't entirely an advantage. People reacted to them, and not to her own abilities. Gritting her teeth, she made a decision to accomplish everything with her own natural talents. Her final two years in high school saw a dramatic improvement in her grades. Sarah went to Harvard, where she graduated with a double major in finance and economics. She went on to get her MBA in the next two years, and one day plans to go to law school.

Upon graduation, Sarah was immediately hired by a prestigious brokerage firm, where she made a name for herself in no time. Her future secured, she felt it was time to use her abilities to help others. No sense jeopardizing all she had worked for, though. Who knows what her financial partners would think of her flying around the New York skyline in a skimpy outfit, tossing jets of flame after bad guys? It would be best to be a bit more discreet . . . Using her middle name, Sarah adopted a second identity, that of Flamin' Jane.

*Typical Dialogue:* "You make me hot . . . allow me to return the favor."

# The Fox

Age 34; 6'2"; 200 lbs. Wears shabby clothes or a fencing suit by day; wears a black bandana and mask, black button-up fencing coat, and a white sash, pants, and knee-length boots by night. The coat has a stylized gray fox head on the left side.

**ST:** 16 [80]      **IQ:** 14 [45]      **Speed:** 9.25  
**DX:** 18 [125]      **HT:** 17 [100]      **Move:** 10  
**Dodge:** 11      **Parry:** 11  
**Damage:** Thrust 1d+1; Swing 2d+2; Rapier 1d+1  
Karate Punch 1d+3; Kick 1d+5

## ADVANTAGES

Alertness +4 [20]; Ambidexterity [10]; Appearance: Very Handsome [25]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Danger Sense [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Extraordinary Luck [30]; Night Vision [10]; Peripheral Vision [15]; Reputation: +4 to residents of Los Angeles [10].

## DISADVANTAGES

Code of Honor: Gentleman's Code [-10]; Compulsive Behavior: Patrol Streets at Night [-15]; Impulsiveness [-10]; Overconfidence [-10]; Poverty: Struggling [-10]; Sense of Duty: Underprivileged Kids [-10]; Truthfulness [-5].

## QUIRKS

Thinks Eddie Murphy should be flogged; Always bows to women when in costume; Highly competitive, enjoys competing with metahumans; Likes to sing, even though he can't; As offended by cruelty to animals as by cruelty to people. [-5]

## SKILLS

Acting [2]-14; Area Knowledge (Watts) [1]-14; Broadsword [2]-18; Criminology [2]-14; Driving (Car) [2]-18; Fencing [16]-21; First Aid [1]-14; French [4]-15; History [2]-13; Karate [16]-20; Politics [2]-14; Professional Skill (Sociology) [1]-13; Running [2]-16; Savoir-Faire [1]-14; Sex Appeal [2]-17; Streetwise [6]-16; Swimming [1]-18; Teaching [2]-14.

As a kid growing up in the Watts section of Los Angeles, Jim Garrett loved swashbuckling stories. He read *The Curse of Capistrano* and all ten of the *Scarlet Pimpernel* books, and watched every Errol Flynn movie ever made. Then he would go home and practice the moves he'd seen. He was a natural athlete in high school, excelling in track and baseball, but he really wanted to fence.

His opportunity came with a scholarship to the University of the Sorbonne in Paris. Not only was he accepted to the fencing team, but his natural charm made him many friends. Back home he was just another black kid from Watts – here



he was an American black, something of a novelty.

In Europe, he gained a view of the world, including America, that was very different from what the American media reported. He left the Sorbonne speaking perfect French, with an increased understanding and appreciation of his people in America – and he was a master fencer. In his last year, as captain of the fencing team, he was unbeaten.

Garrett returned to America with a sense of purpose. He took acting lessons in New York. He studied karate and kendo, earning black belts in both. He supported himself by teaching stage fencing to other struggling actors, and self-defense to anyone who wanted to learn.

When he felt ready, he returned to Los Angeles. Borrowing the mask and cloak of his favorite character, he began prowling the streets of Watts. Young toughs would challenge him – generally only once; there were rumors (true) that he once took on a ten-man gang and won. His kendo and karate had taught him how to subdue an opponent without killing him. He has taken lives to save himself or others, but he very much prefers not to.

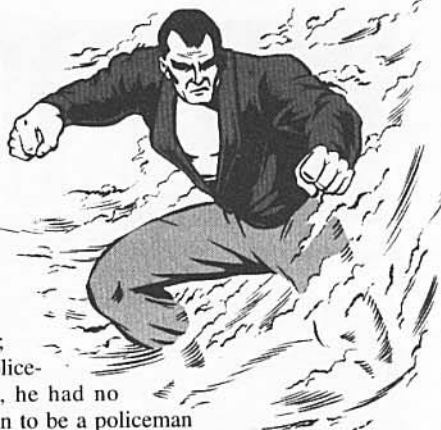
He neither advertises his “real” identity nor makes any effort to conceal it. As Jim Garrett, he continues to teach inner-city residents how to defend themselves; as The Fox, he works to make sure they don't need to use their knowledge as often.

*Typical dialogue:* “A six-inch knife?” (A *shing* as he draws his sword.) “I'll see your six and raise you thirty.”

*Note to GMs:* The Fox is a super-normal, so he would have no unusual background cost in *any* campaign – he's just your everyday, run-of-the-mill 500-point character.

# Nightflick

TOTAL POINTS:  
600



Age 55 (unaging); 6'; 185 lbs. He is pale, and accentuates the effect with white makeup at night. Similarly, he covers his blue eyes with red contact lenses at night, and dyes his salt-and-pepper hair jet black. As Nightflick, he wears elevator shoes that make his height 6'3".

**ST:** 30 [175]      **IQ:** 13 [30]      **Speed:** 7.75  
**DX:** 15 [60]      **HT:** 16 [80]      **Move:** 7 running;  
56 flying; 3 in mist form

**Dodge:** 7  
**Damage:** Thrust 3d; Swing 5d+2

## ADVANTAGES

Reputation: Gardner (+2 among Chicago police, attorneys, vigilantes as a tough, totally clean private eye, +1 among Chicago underworld: fear and respect) and Nightflick (-3 among Chicago drug dealers: paranoid fear). These total 0 points.

## DISADVANTAGES

Enemy: Necron. Appears on 6 or less [-10]; Pacifism: Cannot Harm Innocents [-10]; Secret Identity: life-threatening, people would try to kill him if they knew he was a vampire [-30].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Body of Air (Can carry equipment up to No Encumbrance +10%, Night Only -20%) [45]; Invisible to Machines (Can carry equipment up to No encumbrance +10%, Does not show in mirrors, either +10%) [24]; Invulnerability to Metal [150]; Flight (special effect: instant transformation into giant bat form with his normal abilities) [40]; Super-Flight x2 [40].

## SUPER DISADVANTAGES

Dependency: Human blood (illegal, monthly) [-10]; Weakness: Sunlight (1d per 5 minutes) [-30].

## QUIRKS

Detests drugs and drug dealers; Plays up "fake vampire" schtick; Likes jazz and blues, dislikes rock and roll; Respects police, will not endanger them; Sleeps by day, works by night. [-5]

## SKILLS

Area Knowledge (Chicago) [4]-15; Brawling [2]-16; Broadsword (for clubs) (default) [0]-10; Criminology [10]-17; Disguise [8]-16; Detect Lies [2]-12; Driving (Cars) [1]-14; First Aid/TL7 [2]-14; Forensics (from Criminology) [0]-13; Guns (Pistol) [2]-18; Law [2]-12; Lip Reading [2]-13; Occultism [8]-16; Shadowing [1]-12; Stealth [1]-14; Streetwise [6]-15.

Craig Gardner was a Chicago boy. He grew up in a decaying suburb; his father was a policeman. All his life, he had no other ambition than to be a policeman too. But the week before he was to graduate from the academy, a firing-range accident burst his left eardrum, leaving him unfit to pass a police physical.

So he became a private detective, and a good one. But he was quite unprepared when a pale drug dealer attacked him in an alley one full moon. Gardner drew his gun . . . and the bullets went right through his attacker. Craig Gardner died in that alley. But he didn't stay dead. He awoke an hour later, and staggered home, where he slept through the day. When he woke up, he tried to shave . . . and cast no reflection in the mirror.

Over the next few weeks, he studied and learned all he could about vampires. Then, on the night of the full moon, he felt himself drawn irresistibly back to the alley where he had met the vampire who killed him.

"I created you, my slave. Obey me, and we shall hunt."  
"The hell you say!"

The older vampire might have been Gardner's "creator," but he was no match for the detective, physically or psychically. In a 30-minute slugfest, Gardner beat his foe unconscious, broke off a table leg, and ran it through the vampire's heart.

Craig Gardner is still in the private-eye business, and a new metahuman, Nightflick, has appeared on the Chicago crimefighting scene. Nightflick leaves unconscious drug dealers in front of the police station. Sometimes he leaves dead ones in alleys. With his bad Transylvanian accent, elevator shoes, black-dyed hair, white makeup, and red contact lenses, he doesn't look anything like Craig Gardner. Not that anybody will ever get a photograph . . .

He is not in the least affected by garlic, holy symbols, or running water, but he has been known to pretend fear of these things to put a foe off-guard.

He *does* have to drink human blood every month at the full moon! Failure to do so costs him 1 HT for every 6 hours until he drinks. He does not have to kill his victim. Unfortunately, the blood must be clean. Nightflick does not mind attacking, or even killing, drug dealers – but few of them have healthy blood!

*Typical dialogue:* "I don't want to see you around here again (takes foe's gun or knife and breaks it), or I will do zis to your neck."

"You are a voman, unt I do not like to strike a voman. But I will come back for you on ze full moon, unt ve vill – talk."

# REBEL YELL

Age 68; 5'8"; 175 lbs. His brown hair is just starting to show gray. He invariably dresses in a shirt with the Confederate battle flag, blue gloves and epaulets, Rebel gray pants, black boots and belt, and a blue domino mask.

**ST:** 14 [45]      **IQ:** 10 [-]      **Speed:** 6.75  
**DX:** 13 [30]      **HT:** 14 [45]      **Move:** 6 running;  
 12 flying

**Dodge:** 6  
**Damage:** *Thrust* 1d; *Swing* 2d; *Sonics* 12d

## ADVANTAGES

Appearance: Handsome [15]; Charisma +3 [15]; Reputation +4 in the South, +1 everywhere else [15]; Voice [10].

## DISADVANTAGES

Alcoholism [-15]; Code of Honor: Gentleman's Code [-10]; Fanaticism: The South [-15]; Pacifism: Cannot kill [-15]; Intolerance: Damyankees [-5]; Dependent: 50-point great-grandfather, 9 or less [-6]; Weirdness Magnet [-15].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Damage Resistance +20 [60]; Flight (1 hour per day -40%, Unreliable/14 or less -10%) [20]; Passive Defense +2 [50].

## QUIRKS

Collects fuzzy dice for the Challenger; Thinks he can speak Spanish (he can't); Shatters the windows of people who cut him off in traffic; Plays pinball for hours; Likes ZZ Top. [-5]

## SKILLS

Agronomy [2]-10; Area Knowledge (The South) [8]-14; Brawling [8]-16; Carousing [4]-15; Dancing [2]-13; Driving (Car) [2]-13; Driving (Farm Equipment) [1]-12; Driving (Truck) [4]-14; Fishing [2]-11; Gambling [1]-9; Guns (Pistol) [4]-16; Guns (Rifle) [4]-16; Powerboat [2]-13; Riding [2]-13; Singing [2]-17; Stealth [8]-15; Swimming [2]-14; Tracking [2]-10.

## SUPER-POWERS

Sonic Blast (Instantaneous +20%, Explosive Effect +40%, Stunning +10%, Area Effect +50%) [221]-20(12).

Davis Stewart Miller's earliest memories were of the family home in northeastern Mississippi, where his great-grandfather told tales of serving in the Civil War with General Hood.

**TOTAL POINTS: 500**



As a boy, Miller found many ways to amuse himself. One was to shout at bullfrogs, rabbits, and other small animals; a simple "Hey!" was enough to stun them. Professors at the university in Jackson never did figure out how he could do it. In time, and with practice, he learned to stun animals at a distance, to split rocks, and to break wood.

Grampa had always stressed honor as a quality a Southern gentleman should cultivate. Miller's personal code of honor did not let him use his power on human beings – that is, until a trip into Jackson which coincided with a bank robbery by a pair of small-time thugs. Miller was always afraid he would kill someone with his "yell," so as the thieves fled he didn't try to blast them. Rather, he directed a yell at the street in front of them, causing them to fall into a giant pothole.

Miller liked the idea of aiding people – and found he liked the notoriety that came with herodom as well. He designed a costume, took the name Rebel Yell, and began touring the Deep South in his metallic-blue '70 Dodge Challenger, upholding his idea of Southern chivalry. His great-grandfather, well over 150 years old (and showing no signs of slowing down), insisted on tagging along, and does most of the driving.

There is only one flaw in Rebel Yell's character. Grampa Miller holds that all the problems in their town, Mississippi, the United States, and probably the entire world were caused by "the damyankees." Dave Miller has picked up this bias from his great-grandfather, changing the definition of "damyankee" to include anyone who transgresses his personal code of honor – primarily lawbreakers, but also unreformed Northerners, men who are impolite to ladies, members of Congress, lawyers, and anyone who brags about voting Republican. He reacts to damyankees at -3, and never better than Neutral; this reaction roll can be modified with appropriate "good-old-boy" behavior.

*Typical dialogue:* An ear-splitting "Yeeeeeee-Haw!" followed by the sound of crumbling concrete.

# ROCKMAN

TOTAL POINTS: 500

Age 48; 8'7"; 1120 lbs. He is completely bald, although he has small veins of rock that give him the appearance of eyebrows. He is rarely found without his reading glasses and his favorite pipe, and usually wears a turtle-neck sweater and corduroy pants.

ST: 122 [221]    IQ: 12 [20]    Speed: 6  
DX: 13 [30]    HT: 11 [10]    Move: 4  
Dodge: 4  
Damage: Thrust 13d+1; Swing 15d+1

## ADVANTAGES

Common Sense [10]; Strong Will +4 [16].

## DISADVANTAGES

Appearance Ugly [-10]; Bad Sight (wears glasses) [-10]; Color Blindness [-10]; Gigantism [-10]; No Sense of Smell/Taste [-5]; Pacifism: Cannot Kill [-15]; Mild Weapon Phobia [-20]; Stubbornness [-5].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Body of Stone, Level 24 (Always On -25%, gives PD 6 DR 16) [144]; Damage Resistance +20 [60]; 7 levels Increased Density [35].

## QUIRKS

Refuses to drive a car; Being called "four-eyes" bothers him; Dislikes bullies; Voracious reader; Wants to be left alone. [-5]

## SKILLS

Administration [2]-12; Bicycling [2]-14; Computer Operation [4]-14; Dancing [4]-14; Literature [4]-12; Professional Skill: Library Science (M/H) [8]-14; Research [12]-17; Teaching [4]-13; Writing [4]-13.

Rockman is a quiet, gentle man in spite of his formidable appearance. He is over eight feet tall and appears to be made of stone. He is very strong and surprisingly graceful for his large size. But his strength and grace are new things for Rockman – as a child he was small, frail, and wore thick glasses. His high intelligence, quiet nature, and his name – Clarence Deedlebaum – made life difficult.

Even as a teenager, Clarence spent most of his time hiding out in libraries or in the hills behind his rural Colorado home. One day, while climbing to his favorite reading perch on a rock ledge, he stumbled. The rock gave way and the ledge above his head began to collapse. He remembered nothing from that moment until several hours later when he shook himself from the rubble. Clarence found that his body had grown dramatically and that his skin seemed to have turned to stone.



Clarence discovered that, although his appearance still generated lots of comments, he was no longer picked on. He was allowed to pursue his studies in peace. While in college he was recruited by the DMI to help research potential super-teams. He now works part-time for the DMI – as a research librarian, *not* a crimefighter! – and teaches library science at a junior college the rest of the time. It was here that his students began calling him Rockman. The name stuck and now he uses it professionally.

The DMI would like Rockman to work for it full-time but he refuses. He likes teaching and prefers the greater independence of his part-time status. Rockman is an idealist who works for the DMI because he believes it to be the *right* thing to do. But he's not willing to give up control of his life to *any* organization.

Rockman has a fiancée who teaches medieval history at the same college. He is devoted to her and will turn down assignments which require him to be gone for more than a few days.

Rockman genuinely likes people and wants to be helpful. He's especially protective of the weak and helpless, as he remembers his childhood all too well and refuses to tolerate bullying. He's slow to anger but capable of violence if it's needed to protect others. Criminal elements have attempted to recruit Rockman as a strongarm. All such offers have resulted in the capture and sometimes hospitalization of those who tried to use Rockman's strength for their own ends.

He spends most of his days ambling about campus, smoking a pipe and greeting students. He also devotes two nights a week to working for the campus escort service, making sure that young women get to their dorms safely late at night. Not surprisingly, none of the women he escorts have ever been bothered!

*Typical Dialogue:* "That's *Doctor* Rockman to you, mister!" and "Please don't make me hit you. Neither of us would enjoy it."

# TIEN TIAO

Age 26; 5'6"; 110 lbs. He has straight black hair, kept neatly trimmed, light brown eyes, and usually wears an Eiffel Tower sweatshirt, long pants, and soft leather boots.

**ST:** 10 [-]      **IQ:** 14 [45]      **Speed:** 7.25  
**DX:** 14 [45]      **HT:** 15 [60]      **Move:** 7 running;  
up to 32 jumping  
**Dodge:** 7      **Parry:** 6 judo; 7 karate  
**Damage:** Karate Punch 1d-1, Kick 1d+1; Thrust: 1d-2; Swing: 1d

## ADVANTAGES

Absolute Direction [5].

## DISADVANTAGES

Pacifism: Cannot Kill [-15]; Sense of Duty: Use powers to help everyone [-10]; Scotophobia (fear of darkness) [-30]; Claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces) [-30].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Bouncing  $\times 15$  [180]; DR 17 vs. everything [51]; +15 DR vs. crushing damage (free from Bouncing) [0]; Hard to Kill  $\times 4$  [20]; Immunity to Disease [10]; Immunity to Poison [15]; Instant Regeneration (Affects Others +40%, Touch Only -20%) [120]; PD 3 (free from Bouncing) [0]; Recovery [10]; Super Jump  $\times 5$  (free from Bouncing) [0].

## SUPER-JUMP AND BOUNCING STATS

Maximum length of jump without pushing: 160 yards, or 80 without preparation. Maximum high jump without pushing: 117 feet, or 58 without preparation.

## QUIRKS

Modest and earnest, has great style and doesn't even know it; Wears unneeded eyeglasses because he thinks they make him look older – and always loses them on the first bounce; Spends his off hours in museums and libraries; Loves bouncing, loves heights; Formally polite to elders, only relaxes with those near his own age. [-5]

## SKILLS

Acrobatics [2]-13; Area Knowledge (China) [1]-14; Area Knowledge (Paris) [1]-14; Calligraphy [1]-13; Chinese (native language) [0]-14; Detect Lies [2]-13; Diplomacy [4]-14; English [1/2]-12; French [1]-13; History [1]-12; Japanese [1/2]-12; Judo [2]-13; Jumping [16]-18; Karate [8]-15; Naturalist [1]-12; Savoir-Faire [1]-14; Stealth [1]-13; Tactics [1]-12.

Chie Wei was the son of a Chinese bureaucrat. Studious and ambitious, he was raised to respect both the ideals of Chairman Mao and the practical accomplishments of the Hong Kong capitalists. He would certainly have been one of the "new breed" of Chinese rulers, had fate not stepped in.



When Chie was 17, his father was posted as cultural attaché to the Chinese embassy in Paris. It was his first time away from China, and the young visitor took the obligatory trip up the Eiffel Tower. It was a beautiful spring day; there was almost no wind, and tourists were allowed even at the topmost level. Out of nowhere, a single gust of wind pummeled the tower. Chie was blown, staggering, against the railing – and went over.

Thousands of people watched, unbelieving, as the young man fell for hundreds of feet, hit the concrete – and bounced. He flew almost out of sight, landing in a tree in a nearby park. Unconscious, near death, he was bundled into an ambulance . . . and was fully healed before he got to the hospital.

Chie had manifested a powerful Bouncing ability – though, without skill, only his newly-found healing powers had let him survive his first bounce. Adopting the hero name Tien Tiao ("Heaven Dancer,") he immediately put his powers at the service of his Parisian hosts – and the European love for metaheroes brought favorable publicity to the Chinese embassy. Over the next few years, he manifested other powers, honed his Jumping skill, and developed his youthful martial-arts training to a useful level.

Although he is casually fearless in the face of most dangers, two closely-linked childhood terrors have worsened since his powers manifested. He is badly frightened of enclosed spaces and of the dark. Fortunately, nighttime Paris is never dark! Perhaps he knows subconsciously that suffocation is one of the few things that could easily kill him.

Now 26 years old, Tien Tiao is very much a part of the Parisian metahuman scene. Both the Chinese legation and the French people are very proud of the earnest young healer. The papers often call him "le Danseur," and sometimes "l'ange Chinois" (the Chinese Angel). He'll answer to "Dancer," but "Angel" embarrasses him.

He works informally with several super-groups, and aids IST Paris on request. His greatest value to any team is as a healer – but he's corralled criminals, and even helped to win super-battles. His own offensive abilities are marginal, but he's effectively immune to most attacks, and he's very persistent. A favorite tactic is to draw fire from a foe who can knock him around, but not hurt him. He will bounce into a normal opponent to slam him and knock him back. Against a super-foe, he may high-jump *onto* them to do normal falling damage. Dancer bounces back, but the foe goes down.

On his off hours, he either studies or acts as a one-man emergency response team. The citizens of Paris always cheer when they see the earnest young Chinese, in his brilliant white jumpsuit with the Eiffel Tower on the chest, as he caroms off buildings on his way to an accident scene.

*Typical Dialogue:* "Where am I needed most, please?"

# DASTARDLY VILLAINS

## CHAMPIONS OF EVIL



# H

ERE ARE EIGHT OF THE CHIEF FOES OF THE 1ST AND OTHER CRIMEFIGHTERS OF THE WORLD DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 7.

EACH DESCRIPTION INCLUDES BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS, CHARACTER STATISTICS, SUPER-ABILITIES, GOALS AND PERSONALITIES, AND SOME VILLAINOUS FOUR-COLOR DIALOGUE. ALTHOUGH THESE SUPERS ARE DESIGNED AS NPCs, SEVERAL OF THEM COULD BE USED AS PLAYER CHARACTERS, EVEN WITHOUT CHANGES. BLUE DEMON IS A CREATURE OF PURE EVIL, BUT MOUNT FUJI AND NECRON WERE GOOD, PEACEFUL CITIZENS BEFORE THE MUNDANES TURNED ON THEM. ANY OF THE OTHERS COULD BE USED AS HEROES SIMPLY BY CHANGING THEIR ORIGIN STORIES.

MOST OF THESE VILLAINS ARE BUILT ON 500 POINTS, FOR A "FOUR-COLOR" CAMPAIGN. AS FOR THE HEROES DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 8, THIS COULD BE VARIED DEPENDING ON THE UNUSUAL BACKGROUND COST FOR THE CAMPAIGN. THE SIMPLEST SOLUTION FOR MOST CAMPAIGNS WOULD BE TO INCREASE THEIR VALUE BY THE APPROPRIATE AMOUNT WITHOUT CHANGING THE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION. AFTER ALL, THERE IS NO REASON WHY ALL VILLAINS (OR EVEN MOST OF THEM) NEED TO BE BEGINNING CHARACTERS!

NOTE THAT SOME OF THE CHARACTERS IN THESE TWO CHAPTERS ARE CONNECTED. NECRON AND NIGHTFLICK ARE ENEMIES. BLACK PEARL, ASSIGNED TO 1ST TOKYO, LIKES MOUNT FUJI AND HAS MADE IT A PERSONAL PROJECT TO CAPTURE AND REHABILITATE THE BIG WRESTLER. AND CHEMICO HAS SOMETIMES USED KODIAK AS MUSCLE ON HIS JOBS.

# BLUE DEMON

TOTAL PTS: 1000

8'; 400 lbs. It's a big blue demon, with ram's horns, bat's wings, and one Hell of a bad attitude.

**ST:** 260 [290]

**IQ:** 4 [-50]

**Speed:** 6.75

**DX:** 12 [20]

**HT:** 15 [60]

**Move:** 4 running;  
38 flying

**Dodge:** 5

**Damage:** *Thrust* 27d+2 impaling (+2 is from Body of Metal); *Swing* 29d+2 cutting

## ADVANTAGES

Alertness +5 [25]; Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10].

## DISADVANTAGES

Appearance: Hideous [-20]; Bloodlust [-10]; Gigantism [-10]; Odious Personal Habit: Tortures Victims [-15]; Overconfidence [-10]; Reputation [-20]; Sadism [-15].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Body of Metal, Level 18 (PD 6 DR 18) [162]; Claws [40]; Damage Resistance +40 (Hardened +30%) [156]; Instant Regeneration [100]; Flight [40]; Regrowth [40]; Resurrection [150]; Super Flight  $\times 2$  [40].

## QUIRKS

Plays with its food; Afraid of jet fighters. [-2]

## SKILLS

Brawling [4]-14.

The coven met at midnight to begin the ancient ritual. Caroline, the high priestess, was hurt, angry, and powerful – a bad combination. She had been spurned by her boyfriend, and several people told her he had been seen with Lynn – a witch from another coven with a grudge against Caroline. Caroline knew what she was about to do was dangerous, but it didn't matter. Lynn had thwarted her at every turn, and now Caroline was going to get her out of the way, once and for all.

As the witches chanted, an eerie shape began to fill the room. At first it was nebulous, a vaguely humanoid shape of twisting smoke, but soon it began to solidify into something truly terrifying. It was eight feet tall and had skin that looked like leather but shone like polished blue metal. Its wings were like a bat's, with a span of 15 feet or more. Instead of fingers it had *talons*. Its head looked like a skull with horns, and in place of eyes it had nothing. Not even the back of its head – the witches looked into its eyes and saw a void.

Workers on the night shift at a nearby newspaper reported hearing a tremendous crash. When they rushed out to see what had happened, the apartment building Caroline – and 60 other people – had lived in was being smashed to rubble by a



monster. The photographer who documented the destruction got a Pulitzer prize for his work.

The witnesses called the police, who in turn called the National Guard. But before they could respond to the calls, the "Blue Demon" (as one witness had tagged it) spread its wings and flew off into the night.

Since then, many people have seen the Blue Demon; it has been blamed for thousands of deaths and untold millions in property damage. No one knows what motivates it or where it came from; only one member of the coven survived long enough to question, and she gasped out very little information before she died. So far, all of the substantiated attacks have been in large population centers; researchers have theorized that it is attracted by the psychic energy field created by large numbers of humans. It has, however, been sighted flying over sparsely populated areas, and such early sightings have allowed local authorities in Chicago and Birmingham to successfully repel the Blue Demon.

The Blue Demon's attacks are particularly horrific because killing is one of its kinder habits. It tortures with the ingenuity and cruelty of a savage child, and the strength of a berserk dinosaur. It will linger until the last second, even in the face of a super attack, to wrench more agonies from a victim. The U.N.'s inability to handle the Demon is one of the persistent arguments of the anti-U.N. parties. It is not known if the Demon eats people for nourishment, or just gets satisfaction from munching them up alive. A number of people have vanished completely after each attack. Did the Demon eat them entirely, or take them away to toy with at its leisure?

An unsubstantiated report from Montana had the Blue Demon torturing and eating several shepherds . . . and several hundred sheep. An unlikely coalition of televangelists, law-enforcement supers, and the SPCA are coordinating plans for a massive search-and-destroy operation against the Demon.

The most successful attacks on the Demon have been made by teams of supers; with its size and strength (and high PD and DR), the Blue Demon can resist most ordinary attacks. The demon *has* been killed, several times, but it always comes back, sometimes after no more than a few days.

*Typical Dialogue:* "Snarl . . . <crunch> . . . burrrrrppp."



# CHEMICO

Age 52; 5'10"; 200 lbs. Wears a brown leather mask covering his scalp, eyes, and nose; a black cloak; gray pants; white sash; and Army combat boots. What little exposed skin he has is discolored and ulcerated.

**ST:** 11 [10]      **IQ:** 16 [80]      **Speed:** 5.5  
**DX:** 10 [-]      **HT:** 12 [20]      **Move:** 5  
**Dodge:** 5  
**Damage:** *Melt Flesh* 6d impaling; *Thrust* 1d-1;  
*Swing* 1d+1

## ADVANTAGES

Immunity to Disease [10]; Lightning Calculator [5]; Night Vision [10]; Rapid Healing [5]; Wealthy [20].

## DISADVANTAGES

Appearance: Hideous [-20]; Bully [-10]; Enemy: U.S. Army, 6 or less [-15]; Mute [-25]; Overconfidence [-10].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Damage Resistance +16 [48]; Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Immunity to Poison [15]; Passive Defense 3 [75].

## QUIRKS

Road Runner cartoon fanatic (roots for Wiley); Completely indifferent to other people's pain; Likes to change the fishes' water in pet stores to acid; Wants to see his life story made into a movie; Coffee addict. [-5]

## SKILLS

Biochemistry [20]-19; Chemistry [10]-19; Computer Programming [2]-15; Driving (Car) [4]-11; Genetics [16]-18; Gesture [1]-19; Zoology [2]-15.

## SUPER-POWERS

Alter [83]-16(15); Analyze [20]-15(16); Disintegrate [116]-13(12); Melt Flesh (this is a generic attack power with the Impaling +40% enhancement, doing 6d impaling) [83]-16(6).

Dr. Marty Roberts was an Army research biochemist studying the Seeder genes during the Vietnam War. In particular, the Army wanted to know if the genes could be purposely activated in order to produce a battalion of supersoldiers.

After four years of research, Marty had published numerous papers chronicling his progress and anticipating imminent

**TOTAL  
POINTS:  
600**



success. The Army employed dozens of independent researchers to verify Marty's hypotheses. None did. In fact, the general consensus was that his ideas were dangerous — under no circumstances should human experiments be allowed. Army officials, swayed by the magnitude of the response, canceled the study, informing Roberts that he had two days to pack up. He was *not* to take any of his data or papers. Those were government property.

Marty balked, screamed, and raged, but no one listened. Seething, he locked himself in the lab and quickly readied the equipment to conduct the experiment on himself. There was no time to let the chemical reaction run its normal course, so he dumped in a vial that he hoped would catalyze the process. Instead, the entire lab exploded.

Marty woke up to find the lab building lying in shambles around him; the MPs at the door were dead. While he was searching for pieces of his notes, a jeep drove up and two more MPs jumped out. Instinctively, Marty glared at them, changing chemical compositions in their bodies, melting holes in their flesh. Marty roared with laughter, "Success!"

As the Army base sounded the alarm he tore off into the countryside, never to be found. He now lives in New York, trying to rediscover the transformation formula, making a living by murder and theft (which he enjoys more than making gold and diamonds).

*Typical Dialogue:* None. His voice box was eaten away in one of his recent experiments.

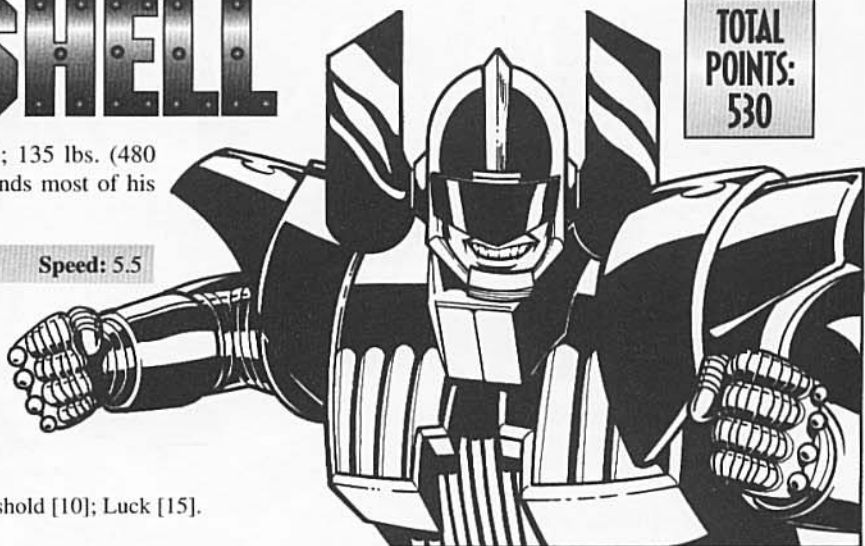
# DARKSHELL

TOTAL  
POINTS:  
530

Age 38; 5'6" (6'9" in the suit); 135 lbs. (480 lbs. in suit). Hispanic male, but spends most of his time in the nickel-plated battlesuit.

**ST:** 11 [10]      **IQ:** 14 [45]  
**DX:** 12 [20]      **HT:** 10 [-]  
**Move:** 5; 160 flying (327 mph)  
**Dodge:** 5  
**Damage:** Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1  
**Suit Damage:** Fireball 8d; Thrust 7d-1; Swing 9d

**Speed:** 5.5



## ADVANTAGES

Danger Sense [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Luck [15].

## DISADVANTAGES

Bully [-10]; Compulsive Liar [-15]; Dyslexia [-15]; Enemy: Police supergroup on 12 or less [-40]; Greed [-15]; Sadism [-15].

## QUIRKS

Enjoys reading comics, wants to be a "real" villain; Likes to drop things from a great height; Avoids telepaths carefully; Distrusts women; Patronizing toward "dumb people," such as he used to be. [-5]

## SKILLS

Area Knowledge (U.S. highways) [2]-15; Battlesuit [6]-16; Blackjack [4]-14; Brawling [2]-13; Carousing [1]-9; Driving (Car) [1]-11; Driving (RV) [1]-11; Lockpicking [2]-14.

## POWERS AND SUPER-SKILLS

Telepathy Power 4 [20]; Mind Shield [6]-15; Telereceive [4]-14.

## THE "DARKSHELL" POWERSUIT

Based on TL8 Medium Body Armor (PD 4, DR 15).

## SUIT SUPER ADVANTAGES

Damage Resistance +40 [120]; Enhanced ST 60 [190]; Flight [40]; Passive Defense +2 [50]; Fast Regeneration on User [50]; Self-Repairing (Fast Regeneration on Suit) [50]; Super Flight  $\times 4$  [80].

## SUIT POWERS AND SUPER SKILLS

Fireball (Rapid Fire  $\times 2$  +80%, Armor Piercing  $\times 2$  +100%) [159]-16(8).

## BASE COST: 739 POINTS

Breakable: -5% (DR 18, HP 125); Can Be Hit (-2 to hit vulnerable parts of suit): -5%; Unique: -25%.

## FINAL COST: 481 POINTS

Raul Esparza was a goon. He was mean, greedy, and not very bright. He made a good living as a professional hit-man.

Eventually, he was recruited by Dr. Herkimer Vail, a successful criminal gadgeteer. Vail was working on a prototype battlesuit; he wanted a bodyguard who would test the suit.

Esparza was happy with the deal. He didn't have to work very hard, and when he did have to do something, it was usually nasty, brutal, and over quickly. When the battlesuit started its test trials, he enjoyed the job even more. He'd always wanted to be a super, and now he could really fly!

But as the testing continued, Esparza realized that he was changing. He seemed to see more, hear more, and understand more. In fact, he seemed to be hearing things before people even *said* them!

Eventually he realized what must have happened. The radioactive power element in the suit had triggered a metahuman reaction, increasing his intelligence and giving him a limited telepathic ability.

One of the things he learned, reading the minds of those around him, was that the doctor had expected some reaction from the power source. Not a metahuman reaction, of course. Dr. Vail had wanted to start his testing in a hurry, and had cut corners on the radiation shield. He expected his guinea pig to die of radiation poisoning.

Esparza knew everything he needed to know about the suit; it was self-repairing. All he needed to do was disable the destruct circuits that Vail had included in the suit. Then he broke Vail's neck and went into business for himself as Darkshell.

*Typical Dialogue:* "Tremble before the awesome might of Darkshell!"

# Icepick

TOTAL  
POINTS:  
500

Age 23; 5'5"; 125 lbs. White hair, pale complexion, pale blue eyes. Wears a costume of light and dark blue, with trim of white, white belt, and white boots.

**ST:** 9 [-10]      **IQ:** 13 [30]      **Speed:** 6.75  
**DX:** 15 [60]      **HT:** 12 [20]      **Move:** 6  
**Dodge:** 7  
**Damage:** Frost Jet 8d impaling;  
Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

## ADVANTAGES

Absolute Direction [5]; Acute Hearing +2 [4]; Alertness +1 [5]; Appearance: Beautiful [15]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Danger Sense [15]; Strong Will +2 [8].

## DISADVANTAGES

Bad Temper [-10]; Compulsive Behavior: Takes anything she wants [-15]; Enemies: Canadian and northern U.S. law enforcement, 6 or less [-15]; Intolerance: Southerners and those who like heat [-5].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Clinging (Ice Only -50%) [13]; Ice Skates [5]; Matter (Ice) Surfing [30]; Move Through Ice [10]; Penetrating Vision x10 (Ice Only -60%) [40]; Regeneration [25]; Temperature Tolerance to Cold [10].

## SUPER DISADVANTAGES

5 levels of Vulnerability to Fire/Heat attacks [-50].

## QUIRKS

Isn't particularly interested in men; Likes diamonds and furs; Likes making ice sculptures; Solitary - dislikes company; Won't talk about her family. [-5]

## SKILLS

Acrobatics [8]-16; Area Knowledge (North American Wilderness) [6]-16; Astronomy [6]-14; Climbing [2]-15; First Aid [6]-16; Jeweler [6]-14; Naturalist [8]-15; Sculpting (Ice) [16]-18; Survival (Forest) [12]-18; Swimming [1]-15.

## SUPER-POWERS

Bind [40]-14(6); Frost Jet (Impaling +40%) [80]-16(8); Ice Wall [56]-17(10); Shape Ice [53]-18(25).

Although she was born and raised on the Texas gulf coast, Sally Jo Lawson hated the heat. She fought with her parents or anyone else who tried to get her away from an air conditioner set to maximum cold. At 16 she left home, hitchhiking north.



She arrived in northern Ontario in the fall and finally felt at home. She reveled in the worsening weather . . . and eventually realized that her will was causing it to get colder yet! She found that she could manipulate snow, ice, and cold at will. She maintains the temperature of her immediate surroundings at or below freezing, heedless of the comfort of those around her. With her abilities she can live off the land quite well without tools.

She has no physical need to protect herself from the cold. Heat and fire, however, are both frightening and physically painful.

Sally Jo adopted the name Icepick and reacts violently to any mention of her origins. She refuses to return to warmer climes and maintains no contact with her family. In fact, she reacts very badly to southern accents, sunbathers, swimmers, and anyone who complains about the cold.

She makes occasional forays to civilization to collect things she needs or wants. She steals, and leaves the frozen corpses of those who get in her way. She's fond of diamonds and furs but has no use for money.

She's a beautiful woman and isn't above using her beauty to catch her foes off guard. But she actively discourages any companionship. She has occasionally cooperated with other super-crooks. On the other hand, she has twice helped drive the Blue Demon away from civilization, afterwards fleeing before the police supers could turn their attention to her. Her favorite temperature is not the only thing that's icy!

*Typical Dialogue:* "Chill out!"

# KODIAK

Age 37; 9'1"; 375 lbs. An extremely large grizzly bear with oversized claws and teeth.

**ST:** 36 [178]    **IQ:** 7 [-20]    **Move:** 7  
**DX:** 16 [80]    **HT:** 14/40 [175]  
**Damage:** Thrust 4d-1 impaling; Swing 6d+1 cutting

**TOTAL  
POINTS:  
500**

## ADVANTAGES

Acute Taste and Smell +1 [2]; Acute Vision +1 [2]; Alertness +8 [40]; Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10].

## DISADVANTAGES

Appearance: Hideous [-20]; Berserk [-15]; Bloodlust [-10]; Reputation: -4 to Canadians, all the time [-10].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Claws [40]; Full Coordination +1 [50]; Passive Defense +1 [25].

## SUPER DISADVANTAGE

Uncontrolled Change (-4 reaction) [-50].

## SKILLS

Brawling [8]-19.

Lou Schaffer was always a difficult child. His mother kept him at home for two years while other kids were going to school, hoping that he would grow out of his violence. Unfortunately he didn't. Instead, the ridicule other kids gave him for being bigger and dumber when he began attending school made Lou mad - really mad. He got into fights constantly; one day he threw a kid down from the top of the gym set. The boy landed on his head, suffering spinal damage that confined him to a wheelchair.

That incident resulted in his being withdrawn from the public school and placed under the special care of the state of Wyoming. The center where he was sent was in Cheyenne, but his parents couldn't afford to move. Always attached to his mother (and civil when around her), Lou protested.

Nothing improved at the center. After another bloody incident involving another patient and an orderly, Lou's supervising psychiatrist recommended electro-shock therapy. Lou, however, wasn't the only one who got a shock. When the current was applied the boy screamed and transformed into a huge creature resembling a humanoid Kodiak bear. He mauled three of the doctors and escaped.

Lou remained at large in the wilds of Wyoming for five years. During the winter of 1985 a hunter shot Lou, mistaking him for a bear. The bullet only passed through the flesh



of his shoulder. He escaped to his lair, ultimately losing consciousness due to blood loss. When he awoke, Lou was in the form of a man - fully grown, naked, and cold.

Eventually he made his way to a town where the sheriff provided him with food and clothes. Barely literate and untrained, Lou had difficulty finding work. Eventually he got a job as a carpenter's gofer. Before the year was up, Lou got entangled in a barroom brawl. Outnumbered four to one, Lou was losing when he involuntarily changed into the bear-like creature again. After tearing one man's throat out, he rumbled out of the bar and vanished into the night.

Lou finally learned how to change between his bear and human forms when he wanted to, but it still happens without his control in times of stress. He finds carpentry work in towns of the northern states, living as normally as possible until the transformation ruins everything, forcing him to move on.

*Note to GMs:* This is Kodiak's 500-point form. For his 100-point form, use whatever normal NPC you wish to have transform into a killer bear!

*Typical Dialogue:* "You lookin' for a closed-casket funeral, buddy?"

# MOUNT FUJI

Age 38; 5'8"; 430 lbs. Wears his long, straight black hair in a top-knot. His costume is red with a broad white stripe and a stylized Mount Fuji in red across the stripe.

**ST:** 188 [254]    **IQ:** 8 [-15]    **Speed:** 6.5  
**DX:** 13 [30]    **HT:** 13 [30]    **Move:** 6  
**Dodge:** 7  
**Damage:** Thrust 19d; Swing 21d+2

**TOTAL  
POINTS:  
500**

## ADVANTAGES

Alertness +1 [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; High Pain Threshold [10].

## DISADVANTAGES

Poverty: Dead Broke [-25]; Fat [-20]; Cannot Harm Innocents [-10]; Enemy: Tokyo Police, 9 or less [-20]; Enemy: Small Yakuza Group, 6 or less [-5]; Gluttony [-5]; Vow: Seeks Honorable Death [-15].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

DR 50 [150]; Increased Density x8 [40]; Extra DR 8 against Crushing Damage (free from Increased Density) [0]; PD +1 [25].

## QUIRKS

Likes making little paper duckies; Loves children – tosses them in the air and catches them; Painfully shy around women; Thinks karate is for weaklings; Concerned that he is too thin. [-5]

## SKILLS

English [1]-7; Hobby (Origami) [6]-14; Hobby (Kite Flying) [2]-15; Sumo Wrestling [24]-17; Brawling [16]-17; Streetwise [12]-13.

Tashi Yamato was destined from birth to be a Sumo wrestler. His mother suffered through a 26-hour labor to give birth to the 16-pound child. By age two, Tashi was consuming two pounds of rice a day, plus anything else he could get his hands on. His parents, poor rice farmers, abandoned him at the door of a famous Sumo wrestling school.

The school's master recognized his potential, and made him an apprentice. He spent the next 15 years training in the junior ranks, in which he was unbeatable.

Tashi began to work his way up the national Sumo ladder. On August 15, 1985, the most fateful day of his short life, Tashiro faced the reigning Grand Champion, Onami, for the Grand Championship of Sumo. Onami was the heavy betting favorite, especially among the ranks of the Yakuza, who wagered several hundred thousand yen on him.



Tashi surprised everyone with the match of his life. To Onami, Tashi was as immovable as a mountain. The pair strained mightily for over ten minutes

before Tashi literally threw Onami from the ring, claiming the Grand Championship for himself.

Those who had bet on Tashi were overjoyed as he was crowned. Those who had bet against him were less happy. As Tashi made his way from the sports center, two disgruntled Yakuza thugs opened fire on him. To everyone (especially Tashi's) surprise, the bullets bounced off!

Tashi grabbed one attacker in each hand and threw them across the arena, then stopped, amazed . . . He had always been strong, but this was a whole new level of power!

Tashi was immediately stripped of his championship; as a metahuman, he had an unfair advantage over his mundane opponents. Later, in the privacy of his room, the disgraced Tashiro attempted to commit *seppuku* to cleanse himself of his shame. To his dismay, the blade of the sword snapped.

Robbed of the only honorable method of killing himself, Tashi became a modern ronin – a renegade samurai, serving no master. He seeks revenge on the Yakuza who exposed his ability, though he holds no malice against the establishment that stripped him of his crown. In his eyes, they behaved honorably. Most importantly, Tashi seeks death. Since he has no honorable way of fulfilling this quest, he seeks out dangerous situations in the hope that a meta-villain will destroy him.

He will seek to provoke a deadly confrontation with any super who opposes him. However, despite the threats he makes, he will not attempt to kill anyone *except* those who have killed normals or murdered dishonorably. Tashi is hunted by the police as a vigilante – he has killed over a dozen thugs and two metahuman murderers in the past six months, but he has developed a loyal following of fans, who view him as the Japanese equivalent of Robin Hood. Many supers, especially the Black Pearl, regret that the wrestler has stepped outside the law.

*Typical Dialogue:* "You will kill me? No? Then I must kill you."

# NECRON

Age 52; 6'2"; 170 lbs. Has silver hair and dark brown eyebrows; usually wears clothes embroidered with mystical sigils, and a cape in purple and gold.

**ST:** 10 [-]      **IQ:** 16 [80]      **Speed:** 5.75  
**DX:** 14 [45]      **HT:** 9 [-10]      **Move:** 5 running;  
10 flying

**Dodge:** 5  
**Damage:** *Death Bolts* 8d impaling; *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d

## ADVANTAGES

Language Talent +5 [10]; Wealth: Comfortable [10].

## DISADVANTAGES

Addiction to heroin [-40]; Bad Temper [-10]; Enemy: Nightflick, 6 or less [-10]; Code of Honor: Cannot Harm Innocents [-10]; Reputation: Evil Wizard, -4 reaction [-20]; Unluckiness [-10].

## SUPER ADVANTAGES

Damage Resistance +8 [24]; Flight [40]; Invisibility (Can carry up to No Encumbrance, +20%) [48]; Passive Defense +4 [100].

## QUIRKS

Collects ancient books of all kinds; Dislikes fundamentalists; Respects science and scientists; Cool and calm when enraged; Always speaks in a precise and bookish fashion. [-5]

## SKILLS

Alchemy/TL4 [4]-15; Area Knowledge (Chicago, default) [0]-12; Chemistry/TL7 [8]-18; Computer Operation/TL7 [1]-16; Driving (Car) [1]-13; History [2]-15; Literature [1]-14; Mathematics [2]-15; Occultism [12]-21; Research [2]-16; Streetwise [1]-15; Teaching [1]-15; English (default) [0]-21; French, Greek, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, all at level 20 [1 point each, total 5 points]; Ancient Egyptian, Ancient Mayan, Ancient Persian, Sanskrit, the Unnamed Tongue, all at level 19 [1 point each, total 5 points]

## SUPER-POWERS

Death Bolt (a generic attack with the Impaling enhancement +40%) [92]-18(8); Illusion (Animated +20% and Moving +20% special enhancements, see skill description) [121]-18(15).

As a graduate student in chemistry, Theodore Klein started a thesis on electrochemistry. His research took him back to early treatises on alchemy. He was able to decipher many of the cryptic references that the old alchemists had used to encode their secrets. The first time he re-created an



**TOTAL POINTS: 500**

alchemical process to electroplate metals, "turning lead to gold," he was elated. The thesis earned him his doctorate.

It became a hobby with him. He began to collect old texts – not just on alchemy, but everything related – including books about black magic and genuine grimoires.

With a keen scientific approach, he isolated workable techniques, separating them from the mumbo-jumbo. When unusual materials or strange rituals were called for, he continued unblinkingly. Animal sacrifices did not disturb him in the least, though he drew the line at human death. His researches continued for six years, during which he became one of Earth's most powerful mages . . . with no training of any kind. His own genius and his use of computers to correlate his information, along with his inherent magical talent, were enough.

But when the University administrators read his paper and toured his workroom they recoiled in horror. Klein was dismissed from his position and his laboratory padlocked. Adding insult to injury, the fundamentalist president of the university filed a complaint with the Chicago police, and Klein was arrested on charges of cruelty to animals. The news made the front page.

Klein bailed himself out and went back to his laboratory. But when he got there, he was horrified. The campus police had just finished burning all his books, journals, and computer disks, including the backups. The university president was making a speech for the news cameras: "Thus the university exorcises the taint of evil that had hidden in its midst . . ."

Klein snapped. In a cold, controlled rage, he used magical bolts to slay the president and scatter the onlookers. He tried to recover his collection, but was able to save only a few scattered pages. Then he flew away, his necktie flapping in the breeze.

Embittered, he continued his researches, trying to recover the knowledge (and the power) he had lost. He became a supervillain in truth, taking the name Necron. He spent most of his remaining power on permanent protective spells, leaving his offensive powers weak and limited. He came to rely on fear, stealth, and guile.

A botched spell left him in constant pain; to fight it, he used heroin, and of course became an addict. When Nightflick started a private war on Chicago's drug dealers, Necron in turn declared war on Nightflick.

*Typical dialogue:* "Opposing me is foolish . . . and foolishness is a capital crime," and "Unfortunately, I cannot turn you into a toad. But I can turn you into a corpse."

# POPROCK

TOTAL  
PTS:  
500



Age 47; 5'8"; 160 lbs. Wears gold-colored body armor, including a helmet; has a nose piercing, dark bushy eyebrows, and a square of dark hair on his lower lip.

**ST:** 11 [10]      **IQ:** 13 [30]      **Speed:** 7.75  
**DX:** 15 [60]      **HT:** 16 [80]      **Move:** 7; 60-mile  
teleport range

**Dodge:** 7  
**Damage:** Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1; "Poprock" 10d(x2)

## ADVANTAGES

Absolute Direction [5]; Appearance: Very Handsome [25]; Danger Sense [15].

## DISADVANTAGES

Alcoholism [-15]; Bad Temper [-10]; Bad Sight (Wears contacts) [-10]; Bully [-10]; Compulsive Carousing [-5]; Gluttony [-5]; Laziness [-10]; Odious Personal Habit: Chain smoker [-10]; Secret Identity [-20].

## QUIRKS

Always eats out; Works out regularly in several different gyms; Prefers to deal with normals, but will stand up to other supers if he must; Contemptuous of "wimps"; Sloppy in all things but personal hygiene. [-5]

## SKILLS

Bard [6]-15; Brawling [8]-18; Carousing [4]-17; Czech (default) [0]-13; Dancing [1]-14; English [1]-12; Running [8]-16; Savoir-Faire [4]-15; Sex Appeal [8]-19; Streetwise [1]-12; Throwing [16]-17.

## SUPER POWERS

Poprocks (Modified Stone Missile: Instantaneous +20%, Delay +40%, Doesn't Harm User +20%, Explosive Effect +40%, Rapid Fire +40%, Stunning +10%) [182]-18(10); Teleport Power-20 (Special effect: loud "pop") [100]; Autoteleport [18]-20; Exoteleport [18]-20.

## NON-SUPER EQUIPMENT

TL8 Medium Body Armor: PD 6, DR 25, 30 lbs.

Janos Paproc fled Czechoslovakia in 1977 between the signing of Charter 77 (a human rights manifesto) and the crackdown which immediately followed it. A dissident and a mutant who discovered his powers by chance, he tired of hiding from the government. He managed to steal a large

amount of money, which he used to bribe a Party official for a valid travel pass. He made his way almost to the West German border before the Party official reported him. As the hounds became audible in the distance, he took one last look at his mother country, and teleported across the line.

Once in Western Europe, Janos tried his hand at honest work, but found it either too boring or too difficult. Seeing the virtual adoration of supers in the European press, even metavillains, he decided that was the life for him. Obtaining a suit of body armor – just in case – he embarked on a criminal career. His original intent was to be one of Europe's "ethical villains," but he drifted away from that. He had too much fun bullying and threatening people. And too often his temper had gotten the better of him, and he had seriously hurt both normals and supers. He was already getting bad press by the early 1980s, so he decided that he might as well go all the way. Registering with the Exchange, he put himself up for hire as a mercenary. Unconcerned about who hired him, he just did his job and collected his money, and didn't worry about the people he'd harmed.

Not that his powers were all that good for anything else. One of his mutant abilities, which he had discovered in his late teens, let him create tiny timebombs which exploded, wounding their victims and sapping their strength. They looked and felt like little rocks, and could be thrown easily. The other was teleportation – good for fleeing from supers or governments and little else, in his opinion.

Janos is little more than a drifter. Once he had a goal in his life – to get out of Czechoslovakia. But having achieved that, he has found nothing to replace it. He relies on his employers to give him a purpose. When an assignment is over, Janos is equally likely to hole up and watch television or to 'port into a population center and wreak havoc. His Danger Sense and Teleportation power have been the only things which have saved him from certain capture many times. Otherwise, his sheer carelessness should have tripped him up long ago.

In combat, Janos tries to avoid other metahumans. Although possessing an effective offensive power, he feels underprotected and vulnerable, even in the armor he habitually wears. While he has defeated heroes in the past, he has little confidence in his combat ability and feels more comfortable taking on normals, even vast numbers of them.

*Typical dialogue:* "Catch."

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# SUPERS CAMPAIGN PLAN

GM: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign name: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign's starting year: \_\_\_\_\_ Rate game time passes: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign type: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign's base location: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Campaign background:**

Brief description of the general background and genre: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of the political/economic situation: \_\_\_\_\_

Will combat be realistically deadly? \_\_\_\_\_

Special status of supers, and general attitude of the public towards supers: \_\_\_\_\_

Laws governing supers: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign's Tech Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Differences from this tech level as described in the Basic Set: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Technology: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Player Character information:**

Source(s) of super-abilities allowed: \_\_\_\_\_

Unusual Background cost(s) for powers: \_\_\_\_\_

Are any powers (e.g., telepathy) prohibited or limited? \_\_\_\_\_

Base wealth for PCs: \_\_\_\_\_ Starting social levels allowed for PCs: \_\_\_\_\_

Language(s) the PCs will need: \_\_\_\_\_

Especially useful/useless character types: \_\_\_\_\_

Especially appropriate/inappropriate professions: \_\_\_\_\_

Advantages and skills that will be especially useful in this campaign: \_\_\_\_\_

Advantages and skills that will be worthless in this campaign: \_\_\_\_\_

Disadvantages that will be discouraged in this campaign, either because they are fatal or because they won't really be disadvantages: \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate Patrons (and base value): \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate Enemies (and base value): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Special disciplines available in this campaign:**

Magic? (How powerful? How common? What rules?) \_\_\_\_\_

Psionics? (How powerful? How common?) \_\_\_\_\_

Higher technology? (What TL? What is the source? How common?) \_\_\_\_\_

Rules variants: New skills, advantages, disadvantages (summarize) \_\_\_\_\_

Rules variants: New super-abilities (summarize) \_\_\_\_\_

Rules variants: New or optional combat rules in use (summarize) \_\_\_\_\_

The GM should also provide the players with details on new gadgets, and their availability; "house rules" for character creation; nonhuman races; important organizations; and history.

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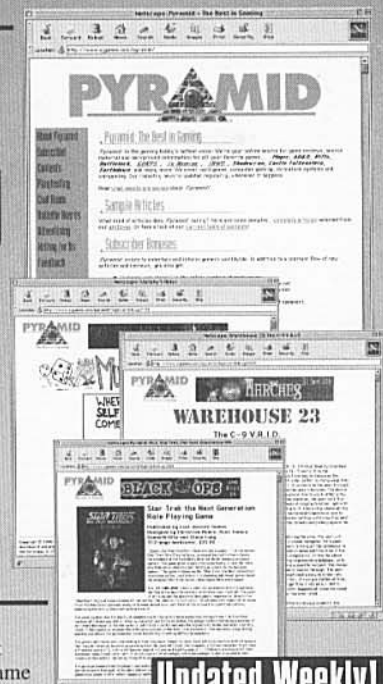
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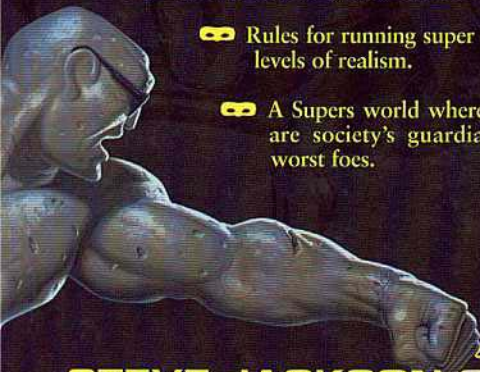
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