

THE HERO SYSTEM ADVANCED PLAYER'S GUIDE



**HERO
SYSTEM**
SIXTH EDITION

III

+10 STR
+5 DEX
HKA 1d6
Blast 10d6

Perception
Skill Quality

Probability Alteration
Time Stop

Running +6m
Leaping +4m

STEVEN S. LONG

STILL MORE RULES!

The HERO System 6th Edition contains all the rules you need to create any sort of character, power, gadget, spell, vehicle, monster, or weapon you can think of. The *HERO System Advanced Player's Guide* expands on those rules, offering more information and options for dedicated **HERO System** gamers.

But if even that's not enough for you, *The HERO System Advanced Player's Guide II* contains even more new rules, optional and variant rules, and rules expansions for your **HERO System** games! It includes:

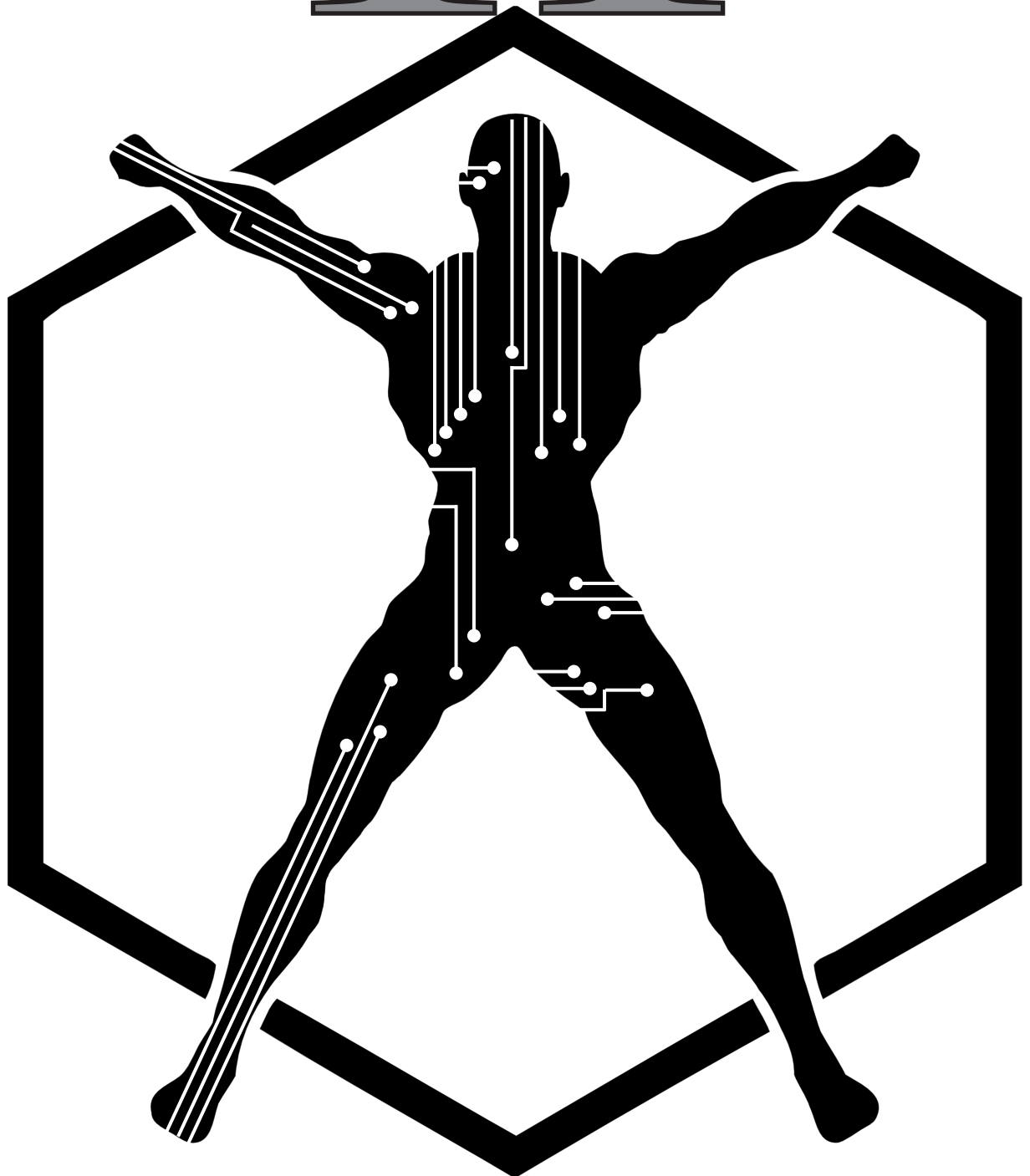
- ❖ rules for resolving Skill use like combat, and for changing combat to work like the Skill system
- ❖ new Powers including Extradimensional Space, Object Creation, Probability Alteration, Replay, and Time Stop
- ❖ Social Combat rules and guidelines, including three sample systems ready for use in any campaign
- ❖ expanded Focus creation rules

With the *Advanced Player's Guide II*, it's even more fun to **Be A Hero!**

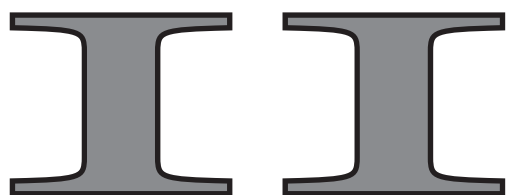


THE HERO SYSTEM **ADVANCED** PLAYER'S GUIDE

III



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INTRODUCTION

ABBREVIATIONS

This book uses the following abbreviations to refer to other *HERO System* books:

6E1: *The HERO System 6th Edition, Volume I: Character Creation*

6E2: *The HERO System 6th Edition, Volume II: Combat And Adventuring*

APG: *The HERO System Advanced Player's Guide*

FH: *Fantasy Hero*

HSB: *The HERO System Bestiary*

HSEG: *The HERO System Equipment Guide*

HSG: *The HERO System Grimoire*

HSMA: *HERO System Martial Arts*

HSS: *HERO System Skills*

HSV: *HERO System Vehicles*

SH: *Star Hero*

If there's any one fact about die-hard *HERO System* fans that tends to be true, regardless of campaign type or play style, it's this: they love rules, and tinkering with rules. They love expansions of existing rules, ideas for replacing one rule with another, optional new rules, and variants of the current rules. For gamers like this, who are always looking for ways to improve their games and making playing more enjoyable, all the rules in *The HERO System 6th Edition* rulebook aren't enough. And all the additional rules in *The HERO System Advanced Player's Guide* aren't enough. They also need *The HERO System Advanced Player's Guide II*!

The "APG2" is just what you need if you're looking for more detailed rules for some specific aspect of *HERO System* play, where you feel like a different approach to an important rule or section of the rulebook will benefit your game, or if you simply enjoy reading and trying out new, optional, and variant rules. It's divided into chapters based on different game elements of the *HERO System*.

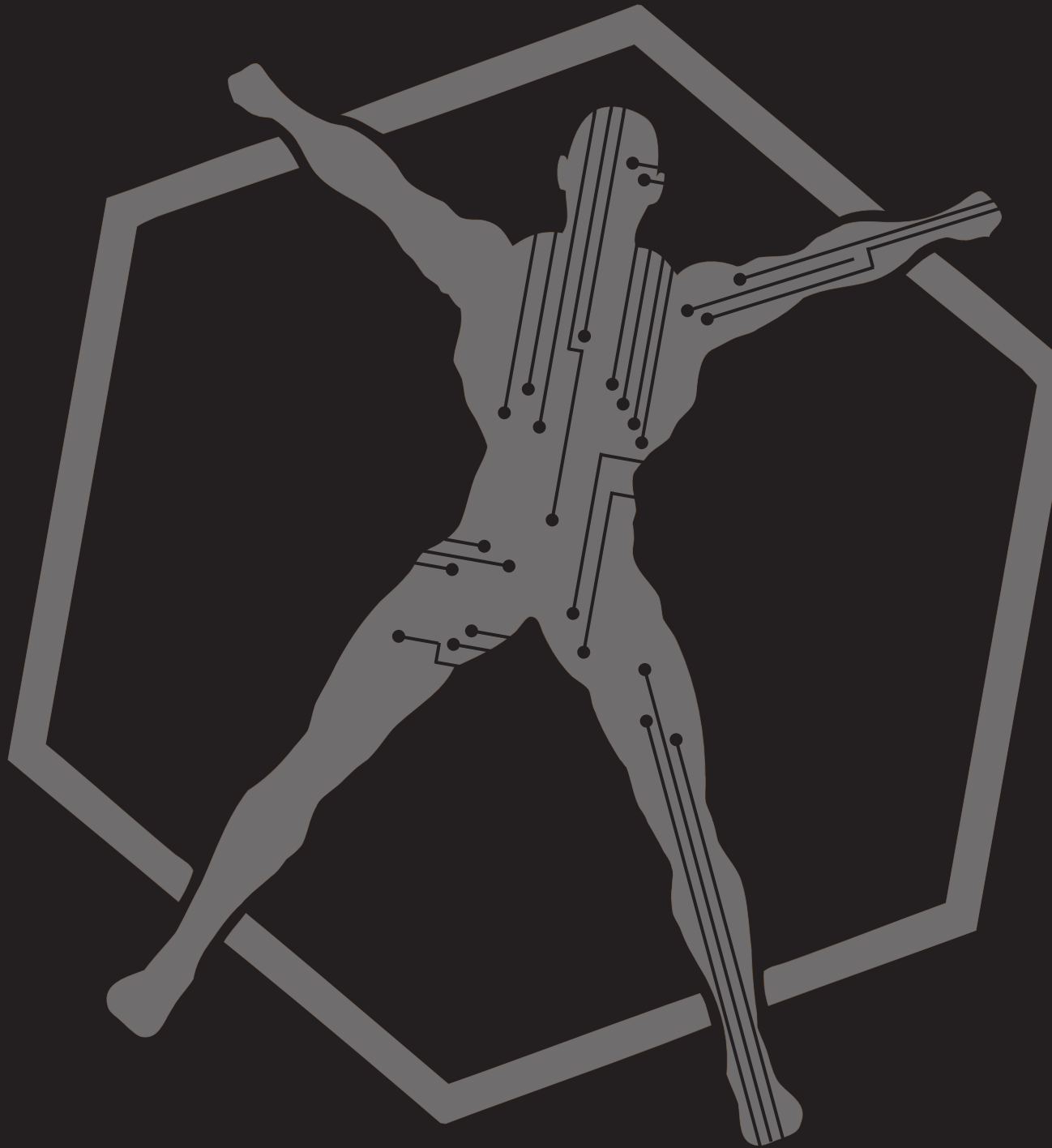
Chapter One, *Characteristics, Skills, Perks, And Talents*, covers those four parts of the *HERO System*, including such things as an expanded STR Table, rules for Skill quality, and some additional options for Danger Sense.

Chapter Two, *Powers, Power Modifiers, And Complications*, has rules clarifications, options, and expansions for some of the most-used elements of the *HERO System*. It includes some new Powers, expanded rules for Psychological Complication, and information on some unusual Power-Advantage combinations.

Chapter Three, *Combat And Adventuring*, is one of the largest in the book. In addition to new, optional, and expanded rules for basic physical combat, it includes some advanced rules for Mental Combat and Social Combat. They're ideal for campaigns that want to emphasize those forms of character interaction, even when it's not strictly combative.

Chapter Four covers *Environment And Equipment*. Among other things, it features an optional system of expanded rules for creating Foci that allows you to more precisely define their BODY, defenses, mass, and size.

All of the new rules (as opposed to clarifications of existing rules) in APG2 are *optional*. The GM isn't required to use them if he doesn't want to, and should consider them carefully before allowing them in play. They may be just the thing for creating certain types of characters and creatures for your campaign... or they may cause serious game balance problems based on your style of play. Players should check with their GMs before using any APG2 rules to build characters.



CHAPTER ONE

***CHARACTERISTICS,
SKILLS, PERKS,
AND TALENTS***



CHARACTERISTICS

1

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Characteristics.

General Rules

PERCEIVABILITY

6E1 124-26 discusses the perceivability of Powers, and to some extent that information can apply to Characteristics and other game elements as well. Characteristics aren't "Obvious" in the same way that a Blast is, but for purposes of buying Power Modifiers such as Invisible Power Effects and Perceivable, they're considered Obvious.

ADVANTAGES FOR CHARACTERISTICS

Given the general structure of the *HERO System* rules, most Advantages bought for Characteristics are naked Advantages. However, as always common sense and dramatic sense should be applied when you consider this issue, because some Advantages for Characteristics should function more like standard Advantages than naked Advantages — typically they're always in effect, don't cost END to use, and so on. Resistant (+½) for PD and ED and Reduced Endurance for STR are two obvious examples. On the other hand, many "offensive" Advantages, such as Area Of Effect or Penetrating for STR, are obviously standard naked Advantages and should be treated as such.

Characters cannot buy the *Inherent* (+¼) Advantage for Characteristics.

CHARACTERISTIC MAXIMA

If a campaign uses Characteristic Maxima rules for STR (or movement), you should calculate the END cost as if the character had paid the normal Character Point cost for the ability. For example, if the cost of STR doubles at 15, a character with STR 40 (which costs a total of 55 Character Points due to the doubling) still only pays 4 END when he uses his STR.

Strength

APG 8-9 has an Expanded Strength Table that provides information for STR up to 200. But for some campaigns, even that's not enough! Page 7 shows what the Strength Table looks like beyond 200, in case you need to toss some planets around.

Perception As A Characteristic

Some abilities are vitally important in almost any campaign, regardless of genre, time period, or power level. One such is the ability to perceive things, be they dangers, clues, warnings, deception, an assassin sneaking up from behind, or something else. The *HERO System* determines whether a character perceives something through the use of *Perception Rolls* (see 6E2 7). A character's PER Roll derives from his INT.

However, given the importance of PER, for some games it might be more balanced, and create more variance among PCs, to remove this function from INT and make Perception (PER) a distinct Characteristic. This has the following effects:

- PER becomes a separate Characteristic. PER has a Base Value of 10; each +1 point of PER costs 1 Character Point.
- calculate the PER Roll normally from PER, the same way you determine INT Rolls from INT or EGO Rolls from EGO: $9 + (\text{PER}/5)$ or less. Thus, a PER 10 character has a PER Roll of 11-; one with PER 23 has a 14- PER Roll.

EXPANDED STRENGTH TABLE II

Strength	Lift (kg)	Damage	Example	Strength	Lift (kg)	Damage	Example
200	25 gigatons (25 x 10 ⁹ tons)	40d6		355	50 exatons	71d6	
205	50 gtons	41d6		360	100 exatons	72d6	The Moon
210	100 gtons	42d6		365	200 exatons	73d6	
215	200 gtons	43d6		370	400 exatons	74d6	Mercury
220	400 gtons	44d6	Mountain (typical)	375	800 exatons	75d6	Mars
225	800 gtons	45d6	Large asteroid	380	1.6 zettatons (1.6 x 10 ²¹ tons)	76d6	
230	1.6 teratons (1.6 x 10 ¹² tons)	46d6		385	3.2 ztons	77d6	
235	3.2 ttons	47d6		390	6.4 ztons	78d6	Earth, Venus
240	6.4 ttons	48d6		395	12.5 ztons	79d6	
245	12.5 ttons	49d6		400	25 ztons	80d6	
250	25 ttons	50d6		405	50 ztons	81d6	
255	50 ttons	51d6		410	100 ztons	82d6	Uranus, Neptune
260	100 ttons	52d6		415	200 ztons	83d6	
265	200 ttons	53d6		420	400 ztons	84d6	
270	400 ttons	54d6		425	800 ztons	85d6	Saturn
275	800 ttons	55d6		430	1.6 yottatons (1.6 x 10 ²⁴ tons)	86d6	
280	1.6 petatons (1.6 x 10 ¹⁵ tons)	56d6		435	3.2 ytons	87d6	Jupiter
285	3.2 ptons	57d6		440	6.4 ytons	88d6	
290	6.4 ptons	58d6		445	12.5 ytons	89d6	
295	12.5 ptons	59d6		450	25 ytons	90d6	
300	25 ptons	60d6		455	50 ytons	91d6	
305	50 ptons	61d6	Very large asteroid	460	100 ytons	92d6	
310	100 ptons	62d6		465	200 ytons	93d6	
315	200 ptons	63d6		470	400 ytons	94d6	
320	400 ptons	64d6		475	800 ytons	95d6	
325	800 ptons	65d6		480	1.6 x 10 ²⁷ tons	96d6	
330	1.6 exatons (1.6 x 10 ¹⁸ tons)	66d6		485	3.2 x 10 ²⁷ tons	97d6	The Sun (Sol)
335	3.2 exatons	67d6		490	6.4 x 10 ²⁷ tons	98d6	Neutron star (max.)
340	6.4 exatons	68d6		495	12.5 x 10 ²⁷ tons	99d6	
345	12.5 exatons	69d6	Pluto	500	25 x 10 ²⁷ tons	100d6	
350	25 exatons	70d6					

- the following Skills, now known as *Perception Skills*, are based on PER rather than INT: Analyze; Concealment; Lipreading; Mimicry. Additionally, the GM may require a character to substitute PER for INT when characters use Intellect Skills in ways that depend on their perceptiveness rather than reasoning, memory, or learning. Examples include: when searching for a trap with Security Systems (as opposed to setting or disarming one, which are still based on INT); when looking for tracks with Tracking, and trying to follow them (as opposed to interpreting what they mean once found); looking for evidence with Criminology or Forensic Medicine (as opposed to figuring out the significance of the evidence after it's been found).

The benefit to redefining PER as a Characteristic is that it keeps INT from becoming too effective in the campaign, and offers characters more ways to distinguish themselves. The drawback is that characters now have to spend more Character Points on Characteristics, instead of deriving a PER Roll “for free.” If appropriate the GM might consider reducing the cost of INT and/or PER to ½ Character Point per point, but that's likely to make it too easy for characters to buy high INT and PER.

If PER becomes a Characteristic, then it can be affected with Adjustment Powers. However, Draining a character's PER doesn't “blind” him — characters can perceive most things without having to succeed with a PER Roll. Reduced (or increased) PER simply makes it harder (or easier) to succeed with a PER Roll when one's required.

PERCEPTION AS A SKILL

Alternately, since PER Rolls are already used in much the same way as Skill Rolls, the GM could choose to make PER an Intellect Skill. That way it still depends on INT to a large degree, but requires characters who want to be really perceptive to pay more for the privilege. Perception would be an Everyman Skill.

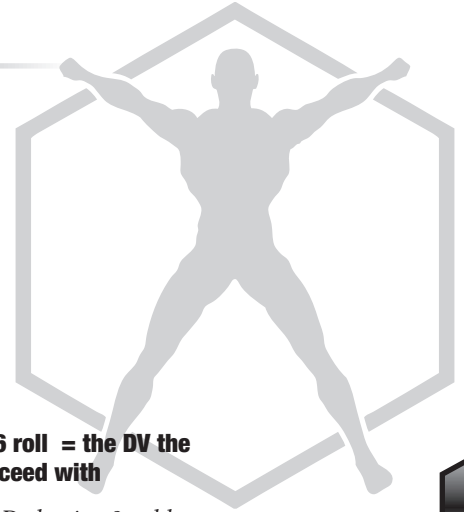
If the GM makes this change, he has to decide whether characters buy PER up in the usual fashion for Intellect Skills (+1 to the roll for each +2 Character Points, which would apply to PER rolls involving any Sense) or they buy it up using the cost structure for Enhanced Perception on 6E1 211. The former approach is simpler and more consistent, but also potentially unbalancing; the latter method offers greater flexibility and character differentiation, but makes it costlier to have a high PER roll.

Speed

A character cannot voluntarily reduce his SPD for just one thing (for example, for Uncontrolled, so he has to pay END less often per Turn) — if he reduces his SPD that reduction applies across the board. In the case of Uncontrolled specifically, reducing SPD to reduce the number of times END has to be paid “locks in” the SPD reduction; until the power runs out of END the character must stay at SPD 2 (or whatever he lowered his SPD to).

If a character has Limited SPD (APG 13) or “secondary SPD” (APG 15) and is affected with an Adjustment Power that applies to SPD, typically his “base” (*i.e.*, non-Limited/primary) SPD is what's affected. Once that SPD has been Drained to 0, Aided to its maximum value, or the like, any such Adjustment Powers would then apply to the Limited/secondary SPD. If the attacker is aware that the target has Limited/secondary SPD, he can choose to target that specifically instead of the “base” SPD. Of course, the GM can alter these rules based on common sense, dramatic sense, and the nature of his setting. For example, in a Fantasy world where it's common for spellcasters to buy extra SPD *Only For Casting Spells* (perhaps through some sort of spell), a spell designed to remove/weaken that ability might exist.

SKILLS



Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Skills.

GENERAL RULES

Skill Difficulty System

One of the “Toolkitting” text boxes on 6E1 55 discusses the possibility of converting the *HERO System’s* Skill rules to function like the combat rules. This section of APG2 expands on those brief notes for gamers interested in “harmonizing” Skill resolution and combat.

SKILL VALUES

In the Skill Difficulty system, a Characteristic-based Skill doesn’t have a Skill Roll. Instead, it has a *Skill Value* (SV), calculated as (Characteristic/3). For example, a character with DEX 18 wouldn’t have Acrobatics 13- and Lockpicking 13-, he’d have Acrobatics 6 and Lockpicking 6. The cost of the base Skill remains the same (such as 3 Character Points for Acrobatics or 2 Character Points for one category of Navigation); each +1 SV with a Skill costs +2 Character Points.

Skills that don’t have rolls continue to function the same way as in the standard rules, and have the same cost. However, Skill Levels provide +1 SV with the relevant Skills, rather than +1 to the roll.

A Familiarity with a Skill is SV 1, and costs 1 Character Point; a Proficiency is SV 2, and costs 2 Character Points.

In the Skill Difficulty system, Characteristic Values and PER Values are calculated and used the same as SVs. For example, a character with INT 15 has an INT Value of 5 and a PER Value of 5.

DIFFICULTY VALUES AND TASK RESOLUTION

Any time a character uses a Skill, the GM must assign a *Difficulty Value* (DV) to the task. The higher the DV, the more difficult the task is, as indicated in the accompanying table.

Whether a character succeeds with an attack is determined by a Skill Roll made with 3d6. All Skill Rolls, regardless of the task being attempted, are resolved as follows:

Skill Roll: $SV + 11 - 3d6 \text{ roll} = \text{the DV the character can succeed with}$

Example: If a character has Deduction 8, add 11 to that to get 19. Then roll 3d6 and subtract that from 19; this tells you the DV he can succeed with. For example, if the roll is 10, he can succeed with $(8 + 11 - 10 =)$ a DV 9 or easier task. If the DV of the task is 9 or lower, he succeeds; if it’s a DV 10 or higher task, he fails.

If the character has SV 7 and rolls a 9, he can succeed with $(7 + 11 - 9 =)$ a DV 9 or lower task.

To put it another way, if the character’s SV and task’s DV are the same, the Skill Roll succeeds on an 11-. For each point by which the character’s SV exceeds the task’s DV, increase that roll by 1; for each point by which the DV exceeds the character’s SV, decrease it by 1.

If the character knows the DV of the task (which the GM is usually, but not always, willing to reveal), he can also make the Skill Roll this way: $11 + SV - DV = \text{number the character needs to roll to succeed}$.

A result of 3 on a Skill Roll always succeeds, and may entitle the character to some extra benefit or advantage. A result of 18 always fails, and may cause the character to incur some disadvantage.

In a Skill Versus Skill Contest, the DV of the task is the SV the character resisting the attempt has in the Skill he’s using. For example, if a character with Stealth 6 wants to sneak past a guard who has a PER Value of 8, the DV of the character’s Stealth roll is 8.

DIFFICULTY VALUES

DV	Difficulty Of Task
1-4	Routine
5-8	Easy
9-12	Difficult
13-16	Extremely Difficult
17 or more	Sheer Folly

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

Many different situations and factors can modify the difficulty of a task, as discussed on 6E1 58-59, APG 23-31, and HSS 31-40. The same rules apply, but the modifier is to the character's SV rather than his Skill Roll. For example, taking extra time provides a +1 SV bonus for each step down the Time Chart beyond the minimum time necessary, whereas poor conditions impose a -1 to -5 SV penalty.

If the GM prefers, he can change this to alter the DV of a task rather than the character's SV. In this case, use the same values, but flip pluses and minuses. Thus, taking extra time provides a -1 DV bonus for each step down the Time Chart beyond the minimum time necessary; poor conditions impose a +1 to +5 DV penalty.

ADAPTING OTHER COMBAT RULES

In addition to changing Skill Rolls to function like Attack Rolls, the GM can also adapt other aspects of the combat rules into the Skill Difficulty system. For example:

- you could use the Coordination rules to represent groups of characters tackling a task requiring a lot of effort or time. The GM assigns the task an amount of "STUN damage" representing its difficulty — the harder the task, the more "STUN" it has. Any character who succeeds in Coordinating can contribute to the overall effort. Any Coordinated character who succeeds with his Skill Roll then rolls a number of dice equal to his SV and counts the Normal Damage STUN. That amount reduces the "STUN" of the task. When the task's "STUN" reaches 0, the characters have successfully completed it. On the other hand, a failed Skill Roll may mean the character has to roll some dice and *add* that amount to the task's "STUN" — his failure has caused problems and made things more difficult.
- the GM could convert various positive Skill modifiers into "Skill Difficulty Maneuvers." For example, Take Extra Time and Extensive Knowledge could be thought of and used as Maneuvers.
- you can adapt the *Unfamiliar Weapon* Combat Modifier as *Unfamiliar Skill*, giving a character the chance to attempt nearly any task with any Skill using the appropriate Characteristic Value with a -3 (or greater) SV penalty (plus any other applicable negative modifiers for things like the difficulty of the task).

Alternately, a GM willing to do a little extra work could establish differing Unfamiliar Skill penalties for each Skill to represent how difficult he thinks each Skill is to use — Skills that are "more technical" or involve "more training" would have higher penalties than Skills nearly anyone can pick up given time or talent. For example, consider the Skill learning categories on HSS 29 — perhaps Easy Skills have a -2

Unfamiliar Skill penalty, Moderate Skills have a -3 penalty, and Difficult Skills have a -4 penalty.

- the GM could reduce the DV of various tasks when characters are out of combat (and not in any similarly stressful situation), representing the fact that using Skills becomes much easier in relaxed circumstances.

Skill Quality

The idea that some methods or places of learning are better than others is a common one in both real life and genre fiction. Students compete to get into Top Ten universities because they think they'll get a better education at them than at a "lesser" school. Libraries boast about how many books they have, since the larger their collection the more one can learn there. Professors perceived as being "better" get higher salaries and more acclaim. In a novel or movie, an apprenticeship with Garadon, Grand Wizard of Vestria, is a better opportunity for a character than studying with the local hedge magician, and a Mark XII Tutorial Computer has far better pedagogical abilities than a Mark VIII.

Not all of these perceptions are necessarily true — a highly-paid professor might earn his salary as a great researcher or fundraiser but be a poor teacher, for example. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that a character's likely to learn more when he uses "better" methods, goes to "better" places of learning, and so forth. Conversely, a character with limited access to teachers and learning materials probably can't learn as much as one with "better" opportunities.

The standard *HERO System* rules don't reflect this. They focus on what the character's roll is, not how he acquired that roll (though HSS 26-29 does have rules for learning Skills). But for roleplaying and background development purposes it may help some characters to have rules and guidelines describing how the quality of a character's learning experiences and opportunities affects his Skill Rolls.

Under the standard *HERO System* rules, tasks are organized into six categories based on difficulty: Routine; Easy; Average; Difficult; Extremely Difficult; and Sheer Folly. It's assumed that all characters are trained to an "Average" level, allowing them to perform Average tasks without penalty, easy tasks with a bonus, and difficult tasks at a penalty. By using these difficulty levels to define the quality of a character's training, you can determine how easily a character can complete certain tasks.

The GM determines the training quality of any given source from which a character can learn a Skill. An excellent university might be able to train characters to have Extremely Difficult quality Skills, whereas a lesser one can only train them to Difficult level. As a result, a character trained at the latter university will suffer greater penalties when performing some tasks than the character who studied at the better institution. (In a sense,

you can think of the higher levels of training quality as equivalent to a form of the standard “extensive knowledge of the subject” Skill modifier discussed on 6E1 58, HSS 33, and APG 24.)

If the GM uses the Skill Quality rules, characters should indicate the type of training they've received in parentheses after the Skill Roll. For example, a character might have Computer Programming 13- (Average), Navigation (Air) 12- (Easy), and Tactics 13- (Difficult). This indicates that however he was trained in Navigation, it wasn't very good (or perhaps he didn't pay close attention in class), whereas his Tactics instructor was better than normal.

The two accompanying tables set forth the basics of the Skill Quality rules. The first one lists the suggested Skill Roll modifiers for various levels of training quality versus levels of task difficulty. For example, a character who's learned a Skill from a Difficult quality source performs Average tasks at a +1 to +3 bonus, but Extremely Difficult ones at a -1 to -3 penalty.

The second table on pages 12-13 lists the suggested difficulty ratings for various tasks in three roughly-defined time periods: Fantasy; Modern; and Science Fiction. (These categories aren't absolutes, of course — a Post-Apocalyptic setting is technically Science Fiction, but may have regressed to Fantasy levels of knowledge, for example.) For many Skills there's little or no variation in task difficulty from period to period, but in others there's significant variation. For example, in the Fantasy era most medical and technical tasks are much harder to perform (if characters even know about them) than they are for Modern or Science Fiction characters... and by Science Fiction standards even modern medicine may seem primitive.

Of course, the GM defines the difficulty category of any given task as he sees fit; the Task Difficulty By Time Period table simply provides guidelines. For example, even though all uses of Climbing are defined as Average difficulty, a GM might rule that scaling a particularly treacherous peak is an Extremely Difficult task — so anyone not trained to such high levels of ability will suffer a Climbing penalty.

Example: *Gorgak Two-Feathers is an orc war-shaman in a Fantasy campaign. His Skills include Oratory 13- (Difficult), Paramedics 13- (Average), and Tactics 13- (Easy). He's leading*

his tribe into battle. Before the fight he gives a rousing speech to increase morale. Any typical use of Oratory is an Average task, and the GM rules that this use of the Skill fits that guideline. Since Gorgak's been trained to Difficult standards, he gets a +1 to +3 bonus (the GM settles on +2).

During the battle one of his warriors suffers a broken arm and he tries to set the bone. That's a Difficult task for Fantasy-era Paramedics, and he's only trained to an Average level of ability, so he suffers a -1 to -3 penalty (the GM applies the lowest amount, -1, on the grounds that Gorgak's tribe fights a lot and he's treated such wounds before).

When the tribe's war-chieftain is slain by a dwarven arrow, Gorgak becomes the commander and must lead the surviving troops to victory. Unfortunately, while Gorgak has some natural talent for Tactics (a 13- roll), his training isn't the best (only to Easy level). Since any use of Tactics is an Average task (unless the GM rules otherwise, which he doesn't in this case), Gorgak suffers a -1 to -3 penalty (the GM uses -2, since the shaman's relatively inexperienced at command).

SPECIFIC SKILLS

Breakfall

If a Move Through attempt misses and the attacker is about to run into an obstacle, he cannot use Breakfall to reduce the impact damage.

Defense Maneuver

Defense Maneuver is a valuable Skill for many characters who get involved in HTH Combat. However, since it provides a series of absolute effects for a flat, relatively cheap, cost, there's little distinction between two characters with the Skill. If the GM wants to eliminate the “absolute” nature of Defense Maneuver, and/or vary the way characters buy it, he can use the following alternate rules for buying the Skill:

Defense Maneuver I: Instead of eliminating the “from behind” Surprised bonus entirely for 3 Character Points, a character can spend 1

TRAINING QUALITY SKILL MODIFIERS

Training Quality	Routine	Easy	Average	Difficult	Extremely Difficult	Sheer Folly
Routine	+0	-1 to -3	-3 to -5	-5 to -6	-7 to -8	-9 or more
Easy	+1 to +3	+0	-1 to -3	-3 to -5	-5 to -6	-7 or more
Average	+3 or more	+1 to +3	+0	-1 to -3	-3 to -5	-5 or more
Difficult	+5 or more	+3 to +5	+1 to +3	+0	-1 to -3	-3 or more
Extremely Difficult	+7 or more	+5 to +6	+3 to +5	+1 to +3	+0	-1 or more
Sheer Folly	+9 or more	+7 to +8	+5 to +6	+3 to +5	+1 to +3	+0



TASK DIFFICULTY BY TIME PERIOD

Skill	Fantasy	Modern	Science Fiction
Acrobatics			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Acting			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Analyze			
Any use	Difficult	Average	Average
Animal Handler			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Autofire Skills			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Breakfall			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Bribery			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Bugging			
Create a bug	N/A	Difficult	Average
Disable/counteract a bug	N/A	Difficult	Average
Operate bug	N/A	Average	Easy
Plant bug	N/A	Average	Easy
Sweep room for bugs	N/A	Average	Easy
Bureaucratics			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Charm			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Climbing			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Combat Driving			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Combat Piloting			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Computer Programming			
Search for information	N/A	Average	Routine
Penetrating computer security	N/A	Difficult	Average
Eliminate traces of activity	N/A	Difficult	Average
Writing a program	N/A	Average	Average
Concealment			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Contortionist			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Conversation			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Cramming			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Criminology			
Examine crime scene	Difficult	Average	Easy

Skill	Fantasy	Modern	Science Fiction
Analyze evidence, simple	Difficult	Average	Easy
Analyze evidence, complex	N/A	Average	Average
Criminological evaluation	Difficult	Average	Average
Cryptography			
Encode a message	Difficult	Average	Easy
Decode a message	Difficult	Average	Easy
Deduction			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Defense Maneuver			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Demolitions			
Create bomb	Difficult	Average	Average
Examine bomb	Difficult	Average	Average
Disarm bomb	Extremely Difficult	Average	Average
Disguise			
Apply disguise	Average	Average	Average
Create disguise	Difficult	Average	Easy
Electronics			
Any use	N/A	Average	Average
Fast Draw			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Forensic Medicine			
Basic visual examination of corpse	Difficult	Average	Average
Perform autopsy	Extremely Difficult	Average	Easy
Forgery			
Create fake object/document	Difficult	Average	Easy
Attempting to detect forgery	Average	Average	Easy
Gambling			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
High Society			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Interrogation			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Inventor			
Any use	Difficult	Average	Average
Knowledge Skill			
Any use	Varies	Varies	Varies
Language			
Any use	Difficult	Average	Average
Lipreading			
Any use	Difficult	Average	Average

TASK DIFFICULTY BY TIME PERIOD (CONT.)

Skill	Fantasy	Modern	Science Fiction
Lockpicking			
Pick a simple lock	Average	Average	Easy
Pick more complex locks	Difficult	Average	Average
Martial Arts			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mechanics			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Mimicry			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Navigation			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Oratory			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Paramedics			
Deliver baby	Difficult	Average	Easy
Provide field medical care	Extremely Difficult	Average	Easy
Set broken bone	Difficult	Average	Easy
Stop bleeding	Difficult	Average	Easy
Treat illness, minor	Difficult	Easy	Routine
Treat illness, severe	Extremely Difficult	Average	Easy
Persuasion			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Power			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Professional Skill			
Any use	Varies	Varies	Varies
Rapid Attack			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Riding			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Science Skill			
Any use	Varies	Varies	Varies
Security Systems			
Disable security system, simple	Average	Average	Easy
Disable security system, complex	Difficult	Average	Average
Locating security system	Average	Average	Average
Shadowing			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Sleight Of Hand			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Stealth			
Any use	Average	Average	Average

Skill	Fantasy	Modern	Science Fiction
Streetwise			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Survival			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Systems Operation			
Analyze recordings	N/A	Average	Easy
Create/repair device	N/A	Average	Average
Eavesdrop on transmission	N/A	Average	Average
Identify strange device	N/A	Average	Average
Improve transmission	N/A	Average	Average
Operate device	N/A	Average	Average
Overcome interference	N/A	Average	Average
Trace transmission	N/A	Average	Average
Tactics			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Teamwork			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Tracking			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Trading			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Transport Familiarity			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Two-Weapon Fighting			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ventriloquism			
Any use	Average	Average	Average
Weapon Familiarity			
Any use	N/A	N/A	N/A
Weaponsmith			
Any use	Average	Average	Average

N/A: Not Applicable, meaning the Skill generally doesn't exist in the specified time period, or that it doesn't involve a roll or other mechanic to which the Skill quality rules apply.

Varies: Depends on the exact KS, PS, or SS in question.

The difficulties listed here assume a character's working with tools, equipment, and information from the same time period. If that's not the case, modifiers for advanced or obsolete technology (HSS 39, APG 30), or similar modifiers, may apply. (So may the modifiers for Skill Period [HSS 34/APG 26] in some cases.) And of course, characters can only use Skills in ways known to them — a medieval blacksmith with Weaponsmith can't use it to make a guided missile, or use Mechanics to build an advanced hydraulic device.



Character Point to buy +1 DCV that only counteracts that bonus. Thus, a character with DCV 10 who wants to eliminate the “from behind” bonus an attacker would ordinarily receive has to spend 5 Character Points (since a Surprise attack halves his DCV 10).

Defense Maneuver II-III: Instead of eliminating the Multiple Attackers bonus entirely for 2 Character Points, a character can spend 1 Character Point to buy +1 DCV that only counteracts that bonus. The more he buys, the more attackers he can effectively avoid/fend off at once. This only applies to attackers the character can perceive (Defense Maneuver II); to expand it to cover attackers he cannot perceive (Defense Maneuver III) costs an additional +3 Character Points regardless of the amount he’s spent on Defense Maneuver II.

Defense Maneuver IV: This level of Defense Maneuver still costs 2 Character Points and has the same effect as in the standard rules.

Martial Arts

Characters may buy the *Reduced Negation Adder* (6E1 144) for Martial Maneuvers. They must buy the Adder separately for each Maneuver; they cannot buy it once for “all of my Martial Arts Maneuvers.”

Penalty Skill Levels

Encumbrance PSLs do not offset the movement penalty imposed by Encumbrance. A character can buy such an ability as +Running (or whatever other ability’s affected) with the *Limitation Only To Offset The Encumbrance Penalty* (-2).

The cumulative -2 OCV penalty for performing multiple Blocks cannot be reduced or eliminated with Penalty Skill Levels; doing that requires Combat Skill Levels.

Characters cannot use Defensive PSLs to counteract the DCV penalty imposed by a Combat or Martial Maneuver, such as Grab or Legsweep.

Power

There may be characters who want to create versions of the *Power* Skill that aren’t based on the main Characteristics (STR, DEX, CON, INT, EGO, or PRE). (Or a character might have an idea that involves redefining some other Skill to work that way.) For example, a form of Power simulating a character’s brawniness or physical durability might be based on BODY.

The GM can permit this if he wants, but generally speaking it’s better to derive Skill rolls only from the main Characteristics. They all have Characteristic Rolls, have costs that are the same or similar, and are bought on the same “scale.” If the GM permits a character to base his *Power* Skill on some other Characteristic, he has to decide how to calculate the Skill Roll and deal with any other rules difficulties that might arise.

Two-Weapon Fighting

When a character uses Two-Weapon Fighting with HTH weapons, those weapons’ STR Minima aren’t added together or otherwise modified. The STR Minimum for each weapon applies to that weapon alone (as noted more generally on 6E2 77).

Weapon Familiarity

The Weapon Familiarity rules apply the same cost to all weapons — learning to use Blades (swords, daggers, and so forth) costs 1 Character Point; so does learning to use maces, staves, bows, handguns, and laser rifles. This has a variety of benefits for gaming purposes, but it may not work as well for campaigns where the GM wants to stress “realism.” Realistically speaking, some weapons are easier to learn than others. For example, a character can learn the club with very little effort, but learning to use a staff to full effect takes time and training; as discussed on FH 198, it’s easier to teach someone to shoot a crossbow (or most guns) more effectively than to shoot a bow.

The accompanying table reconfigures the Weapon Familiarities and assigns a cost based on the difficulty of learning to use the weapon properly. (With this system, it’s not possible to buy entire categories of weapons, like Common Melee Weapons, for a flat cost; characters must purchase each subcategory separately.) Weapons that are easier to use cost less (in some cases, 0 points, indicating all characters can use them to full effect “for free”). The GM can adjust the indicated costs as desired to reflect the nature of his setting, his own opinions on weapons use, and so forth.

If you adopt this system, you should also change the *Unfamiliar Weapon* Combat Modifier (6E2 51). Instead of a flat -3 penalty, the Unfamiliar Weapon penalty equals the WF cost of the weapon (for example, -2 for Axes, -3 for Swords). Thus, a character could buy “partial” knowledge of how to use a weapon as a way of reducing the Unfamiliar Weapon penalty without learning to use the weapon to full effectiveness. For example, a squire who’s training to be a knight may only spend 1 Character Point on WF: Swords at the start of his career. That means he knows how to use a sword better than an untrained man, but not nearly as well as a full knight — he suffers only a -2 OCV Unfamiliar Weapon penalty (3 minus the 1 point he spent) instead of the usual -3.

WEAPON FAMILIARITY COST BY DIFFICULTY

Weapon	Cost	Weapon	Cost
<i>Common Melee Weapons</i>		<i>Uncommon Missile Weapons</i>	
Axes	2	Blowguns	1
Clubs	0	Boomerangs	2
Daggers/Knives	2	Slings	2
Fist-Loads	0	<i>Siege Engines</i>	
Hammers	1	Ballista	3
Maces	1	Catapult	3
Picks	1	Siege Tower	2
Polearms	2	Trebuchet	3
Spears	2	<i>Small Arms</i>	
Swords	3	Assault Rifles/LMGs	2
Unarmed Combat	0	Handguns	1
<i>Uncommon Melee Weapons</i>		Rifles	1
Flails	3	Shotguns	1
Garrote	2	Submachine Guns	2
Lances	2	Thrown Grenades	1
Nets	2	<i>Uncommon Modern Weapons</i>	
Staffs	2	Flamethrowers	2
Whips	2	Grenade Launchers	1
<i>Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons</i>		General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns	2
Chain & Rope Weapons	3	Shoulder-Fired Weapons	2
Ninja Weapons	3	Vehicle Weapons	3 per vehicle
Rings	2		
War Fan	2		
<i>Common Missile Weapons</i>			
Thrown Rocks	0		
Bows	3		
Crossbows	2		
Javelins/Thrown Spears	2		
Thrown Knives/Axes/Darts	2		





TALENTS

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Talents.

Combat Luck

Combat Luck still applies to a character who's Grabbed, Entangled, or otherwise restricted in his ability to move. However, as always the interpretation of the *Luck-Based* Limitation is up to the GM, who may decide that in some situations there's simply no way a restrained character's Combat Luck could help him against an attack.

Danger Sense

Some campaigns take place on a truly enormous scale — star systems, galaxies, or even beyond. 6E1 112 recommends restricting Danger Sense to a planetary level. If the GM of a “cosmic scale” campaign follows that recommendation, characters can increase the range of Danger Sense as follows:

- for an additional +5 points, Danger Sense covers an entire solar system or star cluster (or similar region of the Galaxy);
- for an additional +5 points, Danger Sense covers an entire galaxy;
- for an additional +5 points, Danger Sense covers up to all of Reality.

In other campaigns, characters venture across multiple dimensions. As a default, Danger Sense only applies in the dimension the character currently occupies (or, depending on special effect, only to his native dimension, regardless of where he happens to be). If a character wants to be able to perceive dangers across multiple dimensions, he should buy the *Dimensional Sense* Modifier (6E1 212) for his Danger Sense.

Universal Translator

Universal Translator allows a character to understand any form of communication, and to communicate back in a crude fashion. However, that assumes he's only communicating with one person, or with a group that all speaks the same language he's using — Universal Translator doesn't allow him to “speak in tongues,” communicating with a crowd of people who can all understand him regardless of what languages they speak. In that situation, the character has to pick which language or form of communication he's using to speak to the group.

A character could purchase a “speak in tongues” ability, though — call it *Universal Orator*. It costs 17 Character Points. Universal Orator doesn't allow him to understand anyone else's form of communication, but when he speaks to a group, everyone in the group hears and understands him as if he were speaking that person's native language (or favored language). (This is built as: Telepathy 4d6, Area Of Effect (Voice Range; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (50 Active Points); Broadcast Only (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Incantations (throughout communication; -½), No Range (-½) (total cost: 17 points).)



CHAPTER TWO
***POWERS, POWER
MODIFIERS, AND
COMPLICATIONS***



POWERS

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Powers.

Adjustment Powers

APG 54 notes that if an Adjustment Power has a secondary effect (such as the *Does Knockback* Advantage), then the secondary effect doesn't apply if the target doesn't have the Characteristic or Power that the Adjustment Power was built to affect. In the case of an Adjustment Power that affects more than one ability simultaneously, as long as the target has at least one game element that the Adjustment Power can affect, secondary effects (such as Does Knockback) apply, even if the Adjustment Power has only partial effect against that game element.

Characters buy some Powers with varying types of increments, "sections," or "aspects." Examples include Barrier (where characters buy the PD, ED, BODY, and size of the Barrier separately), Change Environment (which can have many different combat effects), and Tunneling (where the PD Tunnelled through and the velocity are bought separately). If a character hasn't bought up one of those increments or aspects, it can still be affected with Adjustment Powers, provided the GM feels that can be done in a game-balanced fashion and is reasonable in light of the special effects involved. However, any maximums or minimums imposed by the Power can't be exceeded. For example, if a character doesn't spend Character Points to increase his Barrier's thickness beyond the default ½ meter, the thickness could be Aided to make it thicker, but since ½ meter thick is the minimum, it couldn't be Drained to make it thinner.

HALVED EFFECTS

If a character uses an Adjustment Power on a Characteristic or ability that halves the effect of Adjustment Powers (such as CON or STUN), and he rolls an odd number on the dice, the standard *HERO System* rounding rules apply. That means the rounding is usually in favor of the character using the Adjustment Power.

You may also want to consider the halving effect as it relates to the fade/return rate of an

Adjustment Power. The standard rule is that the victim/recipient of an Adjustment Power that affects a defensive Characteristic or ability regains/loses the removed/added points of effect at the standard rate of 5 Character Points per Turn (or other time increment defined by the *Delayed Return Rate* Advantage). The "halved" effect of the Adjustment Power does not apply to the recovery rate. However, as an optional rule, the GM may choose to halve the recovery rate as well, so that the points are regained/lost at the same rate as they were taken away/granted. In that case he has to decide how to handle the fact that 5 is an odd number (such as a recovery rate of 2 one Turn and 3 the next).

POWER FRAMEWORKS

Negatively Adjusting a slot in a Power Framework doesn't change a slot's Active Point cost for purposes of determining how much of the reserve/Pool it uses up. For example, suppose a character has a Multipower with a 60-point reserve and four Fixed slots with 60 Active Points each. If an enemy Drains all four slots to 30 Active Points, the character can't use two slots at once — each slot still has 60 Active Points for purposes of determining how much reserve it "occupies."

POWERS

BARRIER, ENTANGLE

Generally, a character cannot apply positive Adjustment Powers to an already erected Barrier or Entangle. They're Instant Powers, so a character can't improve them with Aid any more than he could somehow use an Adjustment Power to make a Blast stronger after it's already injured someone. (On the other hand, 6E1 217 notes that it's possible to Drain an existing Entangle, and the GM can apply that rule to Barrier as well if desired.) However, in the case of Instant Powers that cost END to maintain, which in some respects function like "Constant Powers," the GM might permit a character to affect them with positive Adjustment Powers. For example, in a Fantasy Hero campaign, the GM might allow an Enhance Magic spell (Aid Magic 6d6) to affect a Wall Of Stone spell built using Barrier, provided the creator of the Wall has to pay END to keep it in existence.

ADVANTAGES

AUTOFIRE OR CONSTANT ADJUSTMENT POWERS

6E1 137 discusses how to apply and track multiple Adjustment Powers against a single target. The Advantages *Autofire* and *Constant* may affect this situation. Each time a Constant Drain damages a target, that counts as a “separate” Drain effect, though that’s really only relevant if the GM’s using the optional method. Each hit from an Autofire Drain counts as a “separate” Drain effect. But since they’re all hitting in the same Phase again this is largely irrelevant; they’ll all recover at the same time anyway.

If a character can somehow Heal multiple Drains at once, then that’s what he does — Heal X separate Drains, whether those Drains come from distinct attacks, one Constant attack, or what have you.

VARIABLE EFFECT

The standard rule is that Variable Effect is worth $+\frac{1}{2}$. However, in some campaigns with a wide variety of powers, or a well-categorized selection of powers, the GM might want to allow a “lesser” or “Limited” form of Variable Effect for $+\frac{1}{4}$. This form of Variable Effect only allows an Adjustment Power to affect a limited subset of a broader group of powers.

For example, in Fantasy campaigns it’s not uncommon for characters to buy Variable Effect for Adjustment Powers so that they can affect any Magic power or spell. If a power can only affect, say, Necromancy Magics or Wizardry Spells, then the GM might only require the character to pay $+\frac{1}{4}$ for Variable Effect. (If the subset is even more restricted, such as Defensive Necromancy Magic, he might even reduce the cost to +0, or make it an Adder instead of an Advantage.)

LIMITATIONS

LINKED

Adjustment Powers affect a power built with Linked as if it’s two powers. The character using the Adjustment Power has to target one of the powers — typically the greater power, though it may depend on special effects, the attacker’s knowledge of the target’s powers, and other factors.

For example, suppose a character has a Lightning Bolt Spell (RKA 2d6 + Linked Flash 4d6). A character with Drain Magic 3d6, Variable Effect (any one Magic power at a time; $+\frac{1}{2}$), has to choose whether to Drain the RKA or the Flash — he can’t affect both at once. (A GM who wants to deal with the additional complication could split the Drain effect between the two powers if he wanted to, but that’s not the default rule.) If the Drain Magic power could affect “any two Magic powers at once” (Expanded Effect + Variable Effect; +1), then the attacker could Drain both powers at the same time.

The standard rules on the proportionality of Linked powers (6E1 385) still apply. Draining a greater power doesn’t affect a character’s ability to use the lesser power at all, and for purposes of determining proportionality you determine a power’s “full strength” based on its current (Adjusted) cost. Continuing the above example, suppose the RKA 2d6 were Drained 10 points, making it an RKA 1d6+1. If the character uses the RKA at its current full strength (1d6+1), he can still use the full Flash 4d6 even though the RKA is normally an RKA 2d6; if he only uses the RKA at half strength, he can only use Flash 2d6.



Attack Powers

The *Beam* (-¼) Limitation (6E1 145) can be taken for powers that also have Boostable Charges (6E1 368). The power must still be used at its normal “full power” level, but can be increased beyond that by expending extra Charges — it doesn’t have to be used at its “Boosted” level every time.



CONTROLLED EFFECT

At the GM’s option, characters can take a new Advantage for Attack Powers, *Controlled Effect*. An attack with this Advantage is performed in the usual manner, but doesn’t necessarily do any damage at that time. Instead, the character making the attack can choose to delay the damage, having it apply to the target at some later point. (The target gets to use any applicable defenses he has at that time to reduce the damage, of course.) For a +¼ Advantage the character can delay the damage for up to 1 Minute. Each step down the Time Chart from there costs an additional +¼ Advantage.

The character doesn’t have to declare when the damage will occur when he makes the attack; he can choose at any time thereafter up to the limit defined by the Advantage. (If he waits longer, the power ceases to affect the victim, who takes no damage at all.) At the GM’s option, if the character has no control over when the damage occurs (for example, it always affects the target seven hours later), the value of the Advantage is reduced by ¼ (but with a minimum value of +¼).

Example: *Master Chang Hwa knows the Fist of Impending Winter, a deadly martial arts attack. He buys that power this way:*

RKA 4d6, Controlled Effect (1 Month; +1¾) (165 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾), Inaccurate (half OCV; -¼), No Range (-½), Requires A Martial Arts Tricks Roll (-½). Total cost: 51 points.

When he’s fighting someone he can choose to use this attack. He makes the Attack Roll in the normal way. If he hits the target, he can apply the damage then, or he can choose to delay it up to one month. For example, a week later he might decide to go ahead and inflict the damage. Or he might learn two days after he makes the attack that the victim is relaxing at a bathhouse and won’t have his armor on (and thus won’t be protected against the damage), and choose to inflict the attack then. If he waits more than a month, the power dissipates and his victim escapes without harm.

At the GM’s option, a character can also choose to define a condition that “triggers” the damage during the defined time frame. This condition has to be specified when the attack is bought, and cannot be changed thereafter; it must be something the character could perceive with his Senses. If the condition occurs within the time frame, the victim takes the damage at that time; if it doesn’t, the power becomes ineffective and the victim isn’t hurt. The classic example from Martial Arts movies is an attack that doesn’t affect the victim until he’s taken a defined number of steps (such as 5, 27, or 1,000). The GM can reduce the value of the Advantage by ¼ to represent this if appropriate (but with a minimum value of +¼). The GM could also allow a character to define *multiple* triggering conditions, but this shouldn’t reduce the value of the Advantage (and might even increase it by +¼ or more).

If a character uses a Controlled Effect attack on a single target multiple times, he can choose to have all the attacks affect the target at the same time. However, each one is a separate attack that the target’s defenses apply against separately; the attacks do not “Coordinate” or in any way add together. (Alternately, the GM could allow the attacks to “Coordinate,” but only if the character declares his intention to do this before he makes any of the attacks *and* succeeds with a Teamwork roll for each attack to “Coordinate with himself.”)

The GM should consider this a “Caution Sign” ability and monitor its use closely. Characters shouldn’t be allowed to make multiple Controlled Effect attacks against defeated foes as a way of “keeping them under control” or pre-emptively defeating them in their next encounter; that’s not what the Advantage is for. It’s intended to create cool, flavorful abilities with some tactical benefit.

Defense Powers

In the case of layered defenses (APG 61), typically Damage Negation should be applied first as discussed on 6E1 183. However, there are still issues in Steps 1 and 2 on APG 61 that the GM may want to take into account, along with special effects and dramatic sense.

ADVANTAGES

ALLOCATABLE

Characters cannot purchase the *Allocatable* Advantage for defenses other than Resistant Protection and Barrier. The GM can of course allow this anyway, but if so he has to deal with the implications and consequences.

If a character has Variable Advantage on Resistant Protection or Barrier, and uses it to make give that Power the Advantage *Allocatable*, if he switches the Variable Advantage to some other Advantage the Allocatable ceases to apply and the PD/ED of the Power “switch back” to the amounts at which they were purchased.

RESISTANT

If a character wants to buy 1 point of PD or ED with Resistant (+½), the cost is 1 Character Point.

LIMITATIONS

ABLATIVE

The minimum damage incurred because an attack is Penetrating qualifies as “exceeding” an Ablative defense for lowering the Required Roll.

Mental Powers

ADVANTAGES

CUMULATIVE

If the target of a Cumulative Mental Power has Mental Defense, the Mental Defense does not reduce the maximum result the attacker can achieve. The defense against a Cumulative attack doesn't reduce the maximum possible accumulated total, it simply makes it take longer to achieve that total by reducing each Effect Roll, as described in the rulebook.

USABLE ON OTHERS

A character typically cannot grant a Usable On Others power to a character through a mental “connection” (such as Mind Scan, a Mind Link, or Telepathy contact). However, the GM can choose to permit this, provided that the following conditions apply:

1. The power to be granted is a Mental Power, or in the GM's judgment “simulates” a mental power (through the use of ACV, AVAD, Line Of Sight, and similar Advantages).
2. The UOO power is bought with a +1 Range Modifier, “Recipient must be within Line Of Sight of grantor, or mentally connected to him, for power to be granted.”

LIMITATIONS

BASED ON CON

Mental Powers which have the *Based On CON* (-1) Limitation are subject to Sense-Affecting Powers and other powers that affect the Mental Sense Group or Mental Powers in general. (Of course, other powers may also affect their usability; a Darkness to Hearing Group field could prevent a character from speaking commands to someone affected by Mind Control Based On CON, for example.) If a character wants to specify that more such powers affect his Based On CON ability, he can do so with a Limitation. If he wants to substitute some other types of powers, he should consult with his GM; this may require an increase or decrease in the Limitation's value.

Movement Powers

Even though the *Position Shift* Adder for Movement Powers doesn't require that a character actually move any distance (as specified on 6E1 157), it does not function if the Movement Power it's bought for has been reduced to 0m in some way.

Absorption

Characters cannot Absorb from Flashes, or other attacks that “count the Normal Damage BODY” to determine their effect. If a Flash has Does BODY, then a character with an appropriate form of Absorption could Absorb from it, as discussed on 6E1 166, but otherwise “counting the Normal Damage BODY” doesn't mean an attack can be Absorbed.

If an attack is defined as doing “physical” or “energy” damage, then Absorption works against it like normal, even if it's, for example, a Mental Power with *Does BODY* or a Drain BODY. If it's a “mental” attack, then a character can only Absorb from it if he's purchased Mental Absorption (see APG 80).

DEFENSIVE ABSORPTION

If a character has Defensive Absorption and has already Absorbed up to his maximum, the defense no longer works. If a character can't Absorb (for whatever reason, including having reached his maximum), Defensive Absorption doesn't provide any defense against attacks.

At the GM's option, characters can buy the +1 form of Defensive Absorption and define the defense provided as Flash Defense (for a defined Sense Group), Mental Defense, or Power Defense instead of Resistant PD or ED. The character has to choose which defense Absorption provides, and can't change it thereafter. However, if the character buys the *Varying Effect* (+¾) Advantage (6E1 167), he can switch between Flash Defense, Mental Defense, and Power Defense as described for PD/ED.

If a character has Defensive Absorption that also has Expanded Effect so that it adds to two or more Characteristics or abilities at a time, this does not increase the amount of defense the character receives. For example, if a character buys Absorption 30 BODY (physical), Expanded Effect (CON and BODY simultaneously; +½), Defensive Absorption (+½), the most PD the character can receive is 30. He doesn't gain up to 60 PD just because his Absorption applies to two Characteristics at once.

ABSORBING FROM OTHER OR MULTIPLE TARGETS

At the GM's option, a character can define his Absorption as working when *another* character takes damage, instead of himself. Typically this represents some sort of “link” or “bond” between the two (be it mystical, mental, spiritual, or something else). However, the character cannot Absorb damage he causes to the other character (any more

than he can use ordinary Absorption to inflict damage on himself and Absorb it).

If the GM uses this rule, then he can expand it further, allowing a character to Absorb from any one of multiple sources (though this doesn't increase the maximum effect of his Absorption). For a +½ Advantage, *Multiple Absorption*, a character can Absorb from either of two sources (typically himself or one other character, but possibly either of two other characters); for each additional +½ Advantage, the character can Absorb from +1 more source. A character with Multiple Absorption can Absorb from any of his sources in the same Phase; he doesn't have to “switch” between them (if he wants his Multiple Absorption to require switching as a Zero Phase Action, reduce the value of Multiple Absorption by ¼).

Aid

Aid's randomness makes it ideal for abilities which shouldn't be as predictable as buying a defined amount of a given Characteristic or Power. However, sometimes that randomness doesn't quite fit the ability a character has in mind, or can cause problems when the dice roll low. To avoid this problem, with the GM's permission, when appropriate a character can define a *Minimum Result* for his Aid roll. If the effect roll is less than the Minimum Result, it automatically gets replaced by the Minimum Result.

If the Minimum Result is less than the average roll for the power (number of dice × 3.5), the GM can permit it as a +0 Advantage. For example, an Aid STR 4d6 (average result: 14) might have a Minimum Result of +10 STR for no extra cost. But if the Minimum Result equals or exceeds the power's average effect roll, the GM should increase the value of the Advantage to +¼, +½, or more — whatever seems necessary to maintain campaign balance.

Another possible option is that the character has to compensate for a Minimum Result with a *Maximum Result* that balances it. While the character's effect roll can't fall below a defined floor, it also can't rise above a defined ceiling. Continuing the example above, if the Minimum Result for Aid STR 4d6 is 10 (6 points above the minimum of 4), perhaps the Maximum Result is 18 (6 points below the maximum of 24) — or maybe the kindhearted GM will round that up to 20.

BOOST

Boost can be thought of as a “Constant” power in some respects. However, it does *not* continue to apply to the target, again and again, until its maximum effect is reached. Furthermore, even if it's bought to the reserve and all slots of a Multipower simultaneously, it cannot maintain the effect if the Multipower slots are switched. Switching the slots cancels the Boost effect (see 6E1 140).

At the GM's option, instead of applying the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain; -½) Limitation to Aid to create a Boost power, a character can instead apply Continuing Charges (or perhaps

even Uncontrolled, or Time Limit if the Aid costs no END). This creates a Boost that doesn't cost the character END to maintain, but only lasts for a defined period of time or until a specific condition's met.

Barrier

Activating Barrier requires an Attack Action, since an Attack Roll may be required (it still requires an Attack Action even if no roll's required because the Barrier's not created at Range). This includes "patching" the damage to repair an existing Barrier, or englobing someone. However, a character can Abort to create a Barrier as a purely defensive Action, unless the GM rules otherwise.

BARRIERS VERSUS CLASSES OF BEINGS

In some types of campaigns the ability to bar certain types of beings from an area is a classic ability. The most common example are Fantasy spells that prevent specific entities — demons, the undead, elementals, Evil beings — from getting close to or touching an area or person. Sometimes it's possible to create these abilities with Powers such as Change Environment (for example, see the *Summoning Circle* spell on HSG 72). However, that often depends on the target being(s) having a Complication of some sort that makes those powers work against them (such as a demon's Physical Complication that prevents it from leaving a *Summoning Circle*). Characters can't always count on being able to take advantage of that sort of weakness.

At the GM's option, a character can create a power to prevent a specific type of being from entering an area by buying Barrier with enough defense to routinely resist the being's standard attacks (see the HSB) and applying the Limitation *Only Works Against [Specific Type Of Being]*. This Limitation is worth -1 for a Very Limited category of beings (fire demons, vampires), -½ for a Limited category of beings (demons, undead), and -¼ for a Slightly Limited category of beings (Evil creatures). Then, by applying the Absolute Effect Rule, the GM can declare that the Barrier is *totally impenetrable* to that category of beings. They can't pass through it (assuming it has Physical Defense), and their attacks cannot pass through it or damage it at all. This is most appropriate when the power has Limitations that restrict how often or easily it can be used (such as Charges, Costs Endurance to maintain, Time Limit, or the like).

ENGLOBING

Since it's relatively easy to buy a Barrier powerful enough to keep most characters "trapped" in a globe (see 6E 171), the GM may want to consider removing this function from Barrier entirely. Characters who want to englobe targets have to buy a Limited form of Entangle to represent that ability (often in a Multipower with Barrier). This isn't entirely logical or consistent with common sense, but sometimes the needs

of game balance and fair play have to trump "realism."

BARRIER AS A "CONSTANT" POWER

Characters often apply the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain; -½) Limitation to Barrier to create a defensive "wall" that they have to expend their personal energy to keep active. This is a common way to create some types of force-fields, for example. If a Barrier costs END to maintain, it vanishes at the end of the Segment if the character stops paying END for any reason. Paying an END maintenance cost does not in any way cause the Barrier to "heal" itself or the like.

At the GM's option, instead of applying the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain; -½) Limitation to create a "maintained Barrier," a character can instead apply Continuing Charges (or perhaps even Uncontrolled, or Time Limit if the Barrier costs no END). This creates a Barrier that doesn't cost the character END to maintain, but only lasts for a defined period of time or until a specific condition's met.

POWERS

ADJUSTMENT POWERS

See page 18 regarding Adjusting an existing Barrier.

DAMAGE NEGATION

See page 24 regarding the interaction of Damage Negation and Barrier.

TELEKINESIS

A character can Link Telekinesis to a Mobile Barrier (see 6E1 173) to give the Barrier "force" to move things.

ADVANTAGES

COUNTERACTS INDIRECT

If a Barrier has the *Counteracts Indirect* Advantage, Indirect attacks made from either side of the Barrier cannot pass through it.

TWO-WAY TRANSPARENT (VARIES)

6E1 173 describes the *One-Way Transparent* Advantage for Barrier. However, characters may sometimes want to create Barriers that are transparent in *both* directions for certain types of attacks. That requires a new Power Modifier, *Two-Way Transparent*.

The value of Two-Way Transparent depends on the frequency that attacks of that special effect occur in the campaign. The accompanying table provides some suggestions. Those values

TWO-WAY TRANSPARENT

Frequency Of Special Effect	Value
Rare	+¼
Uncommon	+0
Common	-¼
Very Common	-½

are based on the assumption that the character who creates the Barrier also has attacks of that special effect. Thus, a Rare or Uncommon attack makes Two-Way Transparent an Advantage (the character can easily attack through his Barrier, but won't often encounter foes who can do the same), but more frequently-used special effects are a Limitation. If that assumption isn't correct, the GM should adjust the value of the Power Modifier to suit.

If a Barrier is Two-Way Transparent to Physical Attacks, then unless the GM rules otherwise characters can move back and forth through it freely as well (unless they happen to be energy beings or the like).

Change Environment

APG 82 has rules for using Change Environment to add Limitations to a power. By default this only works on a single power, not all the target's powers at once or some group of his powers. However, the GM can adapt the *Expanded Effect* and/or *Variable Effect* Advantages from Adjustment Powers for this sort of Change Environment, if desired.

If a character has a Change Environment power with the *Long-Lasting* Adder in a Power Framework, whether the power continues to function if he switches the Framework to another slot is up to the GM. For the sort of typical non-combat effects that Long-Lasting is most appropriate for — things like cleaning up a room instantly, making flowers bloom, mild alterations of the weather, and so on — there's probably no reason for the GM not to let the effect continue after the character deactivates his Change Environment slot. For Change Environment powers intended to be combat-effective, generally a character should use Uncontrolled, Continuing Charges, or some other standard method of making them last once he changes the slot; Long-Lasting shouldn't have that effect.

With the GM's permission a character can buy Penetrative for a Sense/Sense Group to perceive through Change Environment that penalizes that Sense/Sense Group (or Darkness that blocks that Sense/Sense Group). However, the GM should typically require the character to define what types of Change Environment a character's Penetrative Sense can perceive through. Just because two abilities are both defined as Change Environment (-3 to PER Rolls with the Sight Group) doesn't mean they're both the same sort of phenomenon or "thing" — the special effects can be radically different.

Characteristics

Characteristics aren't "Obvious" in the same way that a Blast is, but for purposes of buying Power Modifiers such as Invisible Power Effects and Perceivable, they're considered Obvious.

Clairsentience

As noted on 6E1 179, characters can purchase Sense Modifiers (see 6E1 209) for Clairsentience. If so, the Sense Modifiers increase the END cost of Clairsentience by increasing its Active Point total, per the usual rules; the fact that Enhanced Senses don't ordinarily cost END doesn't change this. On the other hand, even though Enhanced Senses is a Special Power and can't ordinarily be purchased in a Power Framework, Clairsentience isn't a Special Power even with Sense Modifiers and thus can be a slot in a Power Framework.

Clinging

Clinging is a Power, and is thus subject to the rules on activating Powers. It would certainly be possible for a character to activate his Clinging before Grabbing someone, but unless the GM's feeling generous a character can't activate Clinging (or any other Power) after ending his Phase with an attack (such as a Grab), absent some other rule to the contrary (such as using Trigger). On the other hand, if a character Swings up to the side of a building and wants to Cling to it, common and dramatic sense dictate that the GM should let him do so even if it's the end of the character's Phase and he can't technically activate any more powers.

When a character uses Clinging, the GM needs to consider the nature of the surface involved and whether it's strong and sturdy enough to support the character's weight. There are many instances in which considerations of "realism" and common sense should give way to drama, fun, and ease of game play, but that doesn't mean characters can Cling to flimsy wooden walls, rotten drywall, or Japanese *shōji* paper "walls." A surface has to be able to support a character's weight before he can Cling to it, or else he'll simply fall through, tear part of it off, or what have you. (The GM can adapt the rules for crushing damage on 6E2 125 to determine how much "damage" the character does based on his weight, and the "Breaking Things" rules on 6E2 170 to determine how tough a surface is.) A character who wants to be able to Cling to even the lightest, most fragile surfaces should buy some Flight that's Linked to his Clinging to represent how he keeps his weight from affecting the surface.

A character cannot use Clinging to maintain a "hold" on someone he Throws. Per 6E2 62, Throwing a victim requires the character to let him go; using Clinging doesn't change this. However, a character could Slam a target he's Clinging to and still maintain the "hold."

Even if a character has Stretching and Clinging, generally he cannot do a "Multiple Cling-By" by Stretching his arm past multiple targets. Hitting someone while Stretching requires an Attack Roll, and succeeding with the first such roll would end the character's Phase. It would be possible to hit (and thus Cling to) several targets via a Multiple Attack, though.

Damage Negation

If a target has both Barrier and Damage Negation, the “layered defense” rules on APG 61 provide that generally the Barrier applies first (as typically being “outside of” and “away from” the character’s body), with at-the-body, worn, and innate defenses applying thereafter in order. (Obviously special effects may come into play here as well; most forms of Damage Reduction are “innate” defenses, for example, but not all are.) In the case of Damage Negation combined with a Barrier, typically what’s done is this:

1. The Barrier applies first to reduce the damage as usual.
2. If any damage gets through to the character, the GM then uses common and dramatic sense to apply the Damage Negation. This may be a simple matter of removing dice, or the GM may find it easier to divide the remaining damage by the attack’s number of DCs, then remove one “increment” of damage for each -1 DC. (For example, suppose that 35 points of damage are left from a 10 DC attack after it gets through a Barrier. $35/10 = 3.5$. The target has -4 DCs Damage Negation, so he removes $3.5 \times 4 = 14$ points of damage, and takes the remaining 21 [to which his other defenses apply of course].)

When a character has both Damage Negation and a Vulnerability, and is hit with an attack that he’s Vulnerable to and which the Damage Negation affects, the Vulnerability multiplier applies first to increase the damage, then defenses are applied to reduce the damage. Since in this case Damage Classes can’t be subtracted before the damage is rolled (as is usually done for Damage Negation), the GM has to decide how best to apply a Damage Negation defense. Some possibilities include:

- subtracting a defined amount of damage (such 3-5 points of STUN) for each Damage Class that Damage Negation would remove
- roll the full damage and leave the dice on the table; after applying the Vulnerability multiplier, subtract a number of dice equal to the number of DCs the Damage Negation removes (but do not “multiply” the amount on them when subtracting). To keep things fair, the first die subtracted should be the highest die, the second should be the lowest die, the third the highest remaining die, the fourth the lowest remaining die, and so on.

Darkness

With the GM’s permission a character can buy Penetrative for a Sense/Sense Group to perceive through Darkness (or Change Environment that penalizes that Sense/Sense Group). However, the GM should typically require the character to define what types of Darkness a character’s

Penetrative Sense can perceive through. Just because two abilities are both defined as Darkness versus Sight Group doesn’t mean they’re both the same sort of phenomenon or “thing” — the special effects can be radically different.

Deflection

Characters can apply No Range Modifier to Deflection. Characters cannot apply Area Of Effect (Accurate) to Deflection.

The -2 OCV penalty for Blocking for another person applies when a character uses Deflection to Block a Ranged attack aimed at another person. As noted on 6E1 187, Deflection lets a character use the rules for Blocking Ranged attacks at Range. Per 6E2 59, the standard rules for Block apply to Blocking Ranged attacks, unless the rules note otherwise or the GM makes a different ruling. The -2 penalty for Blocking attacks made against another person is a standard Block rule, and therefore applies to Deflection.

Desolidification

If a character is Desolidified and has a Damage Shield, and someone with an Affects Desolidified attack hits him with that attack in HTH Combat, the Damage Shield does not affect the attacker. The character still needs Affects Physical World on the Damage Shield if he wants to hurt a solid attacker.

If a character has Desolidification with the *Doesn’t Protect Against Damage* Limitation, he can still Reflect Ranged attacks made against him (assuming the attack’s Reflectable under the standard rules for that power). However, the GM’s free to rule otherwise if he foresees a game balance, dramatic sense, or special effects problem.

If a character uses a Constant Power on a target, and the character then becomes Desolidified, the Constant Power doesn’t continue to affect the target. Once a character Desolidifies, any Constant Powers he’s maintaining cease to affect the physical world at that time. If he wanted to, he could continue paying END to keep the Constant Powers functioning so that they’ll start to affect the target again when he (the character) becomes solid again (thus saving himself the need to use another Attack Action and succeed with another Attack Roll). But as long as he’s Desolidified, a character cannot affect the physical world. However, the “lingering” effects of Instant Powers don’t vanish just because the character who created them Desolidifies. Examples including continuing-effect Mental Powers (see 6E1 191), Barriers, and Entangles.

A character with Desolidification doesn’t have to buy his PRE with the *Affects Physical World* Advantage to be able to make Presence Attacks against solid targets while Desolidified, unless the GM rules otherwise for some reason. However, in regard to Presence Attacks involving threats, intimidation, and the like, in most cases the target will be aware of the fact that the character making

the Presence Attack is Desolidified. Unless he's also aware of abilities the character has that would make it possible for him to harm or affect the target, the GM should impose severe penalties on the Presence Attack — so severe, in fact, as to virtually negate it, unless the attacker's clever enough to find a way around that in how he states his threat.

Mental Powers with the *Based On CON* (-1) Limitation affect Desolidified characters the same way that any other Mental Power does, unless some other Limitation indicates otherwise. For example, typically such powers are bought through Foci, and a solid Focus can't touch a Desolidified target to affect him.

Dispel

Dispel cannot take the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain) Limitation.

For some types of Dispel-based abilities, characters may want to define how long the Dispel remains in effect before the Dispelled ability can be “reactivated.” This might be appropriate for some types of curses in Fantasy games, for example. Consider a spell that prevents the target from using any of his magical powers until the next full moon occurs. With the GM's permission, characters can buy a new Advantage, *Restricted Reactivation*, that defines how long a Dispel remains in effect. Until that amount of time passes, the target cannot reactivate or otherwise use the Dispelled power. Restricted Reactivation costs $+\frac{1}{4}$ for a duration of up to 1 Turn, $+\frac{1}{2}$ for 1 Minute, $+\frac{3}{4}$ for 5 Minutes, and so on at the rate of an additional $+\frac{1}{4}$ Advantage per step down the Time Chart. At the GM's option, the character can define some other reactivation condition other than the passage of time, such as “until the character visits the Shrine of St. Athelm and performs the Ritual of Penance before the high altar.” In either case, Restricted Reactivation should be considered a “Caution Sign” ability, and if necessary the GM should increase the cost of the Advantage to maintain campaign balance.

Drain (and Suppress)

If a character uses a Drain on a Characteristic or ability that halves the effect of Adjustment Powers (such as CON or STUN), the target's Power Defense applies before the halving, then any remaining “damage” suffered by the target is half effect as described in the rulebook.

Many characters have “Transfer” powers that Drain X amount of some Characteristic or ability, and then Aid the character using the Drain for the same X amount (with the Standard Effect Rule specifying that the Aid has the same roll result as the Drain). The *Stun Transfer* power on 6E1 197 is an example. In some cases one part of this “Transfer” power may apply to a Characteristic that halves the effect of Adjustment Powers. In this case the standard rules for Adjustment Powers apply to both halves of the compound power. For

example, suppose a character has a power called *Your Strength Is My Strength*, defined as Drain STR 3d6 + Aid CON 3d6. If he rolls a 10, then he Drains 10 STR and Aids himself for 5 CON.

SUPPRESS

Even though Suppress is in effect a “Constant” power, it does not continue to apply to the target, again and again, until its maximum effect is reached. It just applies once per attack, and the effect lasts as long as the attacker continues to pay END.

At the GM's option, instead of applying the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain; $-\frac{1}{2}$) Limitation to Drain to create a Suppress power, a character can instead apply Continuing Charges (or perhaps even Uncontrolled, or Time Limit if the Aid costs no END). This creates a Suppress that doesn't cost the character END to maintain, but only lasts for a defined period of time or until a specific condition's met.

Duplication

When you calculate the average damage when Duplicates recombine, use the number of Duplicates created at that time, not the maximum possible number of Duplicates the character could create.

Enhanced Senses

If a character has the *Dimensional Sense* Modifier that allows him to perceive a given dimension, when he's in that dimension his Sense does *not* allow him to perceive into his home dimension from there. To do that he either needs another Dimensional Sense, or he has to more broadly define the group of dimensions his Dimensional applies to.

Entangle

An Entangle can have the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain) Limitation. If the character stops paying END, the Entangle collapses in total at the end of that Segment, freeing anyone captured. Paying an END maintenance cost does not in any way cause the Entangle to “heal” itself, or the like.

If a character buys Entangle with Area Of Effect, and the Entangle has a physical special effect (such as a big net, a huge block of ice, or a field of goop from a glue grenade), the issue of whether the physical material of the Entangle fills the entire Area may arise. The answer largely depends on special effects and thus is up to the GM, but the default rule is that the physical material of the Entangle fills the entire Area. But unless the Entangle is Constant, it has no effect on characters moving into or through that Area. It doesn't Entangle them, impede their movement, or the like.

BREAKING FREE FROM ENTANGLES

If a character trapped in an Entangle uses his STR to break free and has a Hand-To-Hand Attack, whether the HA dice add to his STR dice for purposes of escaping the Entangle is up to the GM. The answer typically depends on the special effects involved, but in most cases the HA dice do add to the character's STR dice. The same considerations may apply when a character wants to use an HKA to break free. (Of course, if the HA or HKA is bought through an Accessible Focus, an Entangled character typically cannot use it to break free.)

6E1 216 states that a character automatically hits an Entangle restraining him. If an Entangled character uses an Autofire attack, whether he automatically hit with all of his shots is up to the GM, and depends largely on the circumstances. There are some situations where most GMs would allow that, and others where they'd let the first hit succeed automatically but require an Attack Roll (as an Action that takes no time) to determine how many additional shots (up to the defined maximum) hit the Entangle.

ENTANGLES THAT DIMINISH STRENGTH

The ability most commonly used to break free from an Entangle is STR (and in the case of an Entangle with the +1 form of Takes No Damage From Attacks, that's the *only* way to break free). However, some types of Entangles tend to be more difficult to escape with STR because they "weaken" the victim in some way. Examples include weighted nets (which are much heavier than regular nets) and "energy shackles" that interfere with the victim's nervous system so he can't bring his strength to bear on them.

The standard way to build this sort of Entangle is to Link a Drain STR to it, but that may lead to overly complex power constructions. With the GM's permission, characters can instead buy an optional new Advantage for Entangle, *Reduces STR*. The value of this Advantage depends on how intensely it affects the victim: for a +¼ Advantage the victim can only apply 75% of his STR to break free; for a +½ Advantage he can only apply 50% of his STR; and for +1 he can only apply 25% of his STR. This reduction applies to the STR used to break out in any way (including STR added to HKAs), but does not apply to reduce HA dice. This Advantage is most effective when applied to Entangles with the +1 form of Takes No Damage From Attacks, but can be bought for any Entangle. This is a "Caution Sign" ability.

ENTANGLES OF LESSER EFFECT

In broad terms, Entangles do two things: they stop a character from moving, reducing him to DCV 0; and they prevent a character from using Accessible Foci. At the GM's option, you can split these effects "in two," making it possible for a character to buy an Entangle that does one but not the other.

For these purposes, stopping movement and reducing the target to DCV 0 (as described on 6E1 215-16) costs 3 Character Points per 1d6; preventing the use of Accessible Foci (as described on 6E1 216) costs 2 Character Points per 1d6 (thus, the two together add up to the standard cost of 5 Character Points per 1d6 of BODY, with the other 5 Character Points per 1d6 of Entangle paying for the PD/ED, as discussed on 6E1 218 under "Additional BODY" and "Additional Defense").

Extradimensional Space

Items that are bigger on the inside than the outside — such as enchanted sacks or chests that are easily carried but can hold hundreds of pounds of treasure, or Science Fiction vehicles built with dimensional engineering techniques that allow a planet's worth of space in a vessel no larger than a yacht — are common in some settings or genres. There are several ways to create such items using the *HERO System* rules, but they may leave GMs concerned with exactly how much can fit inside them or how easily characters can carry them. If you have such concerns in your campaign and want a simpler way to handle this sort of ability, consider the following optional new Power:



EXTRADIMENSIONAL SPACE

Type:	Special Power
Duration:	Persistent
Target:	Self Only
Range:	Self
Costs END:	No
Cost:	5 Character Points for up to 1 cubic meter of extradimensional storage space; +5 Character Points for each x2 volume

A character with this Special Power has the ability to access an extradimensional storage space. Some examples of Extradimensional Space include enchanted pouches that are small enough to wear on a belt but can hold a dozen cubic meters' worth of material, or time machines that are bigger on the inside than the outside. Extradimensional Space does not cost END to use.

Extradimensional Space costs 5 Character Points for up to 1 cubic meter of extradimensional storage space. A character can double his amount of extradimensional storage space — 2 cubic meters, 4 cubic meters, 8 cubic meters, and so on — for each +5 Character Points.

Objects stored in Extradimensional Space are not ordinarily perceivable from other dimensions except by the character who's bought the Power (he can always perceive what he's stored in the Space). They have no weight as long as they're in Extradimensional Space; the character who bought the Power can carry them regardless of his STR and they don't Encumber him.



Unless the GM rules otherwise, a character must use a Full Phase Action to put an object into, or retrieve an object from, an Extradimensional Space.

Typically Extradimensional Space is bought through a Focus (such as a bag, pouch, chest, barrel, or other container) or is associated with some other object (like a Vehicle or Base). However, this isn't required; characters can buy the ability to create/access an Extradimensional Space through a spell or superpower, for example. However, the GM should consider non-Focused Extradimensional Space a "Caution Sign" Power.

THE NATURE OF EXTRADIMENSIONAL SPACE

The GM defines the nature of extradimensional space for his campaign. This includes such issues as whether it has air, light, heat, or geographical features; whether characters can be trapped there, enter it voluntarily, or survive there; and how easy it is for a character to find something once he puts it in the space. In some campaigns extradimensional space will be a well-defined "alternate reality" governed by its own rules that offers all sorts of adventure potential; in others it's simply a way for a character to carry around as much loot as he can acquire.

POWERS

Clairsentience, Enhanced Senses: All uses of Extradimensional Space in a campaign count as a single "dimension" for purposes of buying Senses with the *Dimensional Sense Modifier* (see below).

ADVANTAGES

Transdimensional: All uses of Extradimensional Space in a campaign count as a single "dimension" for purposes of buying abilities with Transdimensional. For example, a character could use Teleportation, Transdimensional, Usable As Attack to apport objects out of an Extradimensional Space and steal them from their owner. However, just because a character has a Transdimensional power doesn't mean he can automatically perceive the existence of Extradimensional Space-based Foci or abilities. He needs some sort of Enhanced Sense to detect them, and if he wants to take specific items from them he also needs an appropriate Sense with the *Dimensional Sense Modifier* to perceive into the Extradimensional Space.

LIMITATIONS

Costs Endurance: Characters can buy the "only to activate" form of this Limitation for Extradimensional Space to simulate the fact that it tires them to open/access the Space.

Extra Time: Characters can take Extra Time on Extradimensional Space to increase the length of time it takes to put an object into Extradimensional Space and/or retrieve objects from it. This could, for example, represent the fact that the character has to rummage through his Extradimensional Space to find the specific item he wants.

Limited Access (-1½ to -¼): This Limitation, commonly taken for Extradimensional Space bought through a Focus, restricts the size of objects that can be placed in the Extradimensional Space based on the opening in the Focus (such as the mouth of a bag or lid of a chest) — characters simply can't put items that are too big into the Space, regardless of how much volume the Space has. The value of the Limitation depends on the size of the opening: if it's smaller than the size of a normal human hand, -1½; if it's roughly hand-sized, -1; if it's twice hand-sized, -¾, four times hand-sized, -½; and larger than four times hand-sized, -¼ (or less).

Limited Contents (varies): This Limitation represents a form of Extradimensional Space that can only hold certain type or types of objects; the value of the Limitation depends on how restrictive the chosen type(s) seem to the GM. For example, in a Fantasy campaign a bibulous wizard might create a Flask of Endless Whiskey that can hold eight cubic meters (2,114 gallons!) of any type of liquid (a -½ Limitation).

Limited Weight (-1½ or less): This Limitation signifies that the Extradimensional Space can only hold so much weight regardless of volume; if the weight limit is exceeded, the Extradimensional Space "breaks" and deposits its contents at a location in the character's dimension corresponding to the Space's location. If the weight limit is 100 kg or less, the Limitation's worth -1½; for each doubling of the weight capacity (up to 200 kg, up to 400 kg, and so on), reduce the Limitation's value by ¼ (to a minimum of -0).

Flash

As noted on 6E2 10, a character's voice has some Sense-like aspects, given that Darkness versus Hearing Group can prevent a character from making sounds when he moves his lips. At the GM's option, a character can buy Flash versus Voice as if it were a Nontargeting Sense. A character whose Voice is Flashed cannot make any noise when he tries to speak (and he cannot use powers that require Incantations). He may be able to communicate in other ways, though, including having his lips read, using sign language, or expressing his displeasure at being silenced by administering several blows to his attacker's head with a blunt instrument.

Flash can have the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain) Limitation. If the character stops paying END, the Flash effect stops working in total at the end of that Segment, allowing the victim to perceive again. Paying an END maintenance cost does not in any way cause the Flash to keep functioning beyond its rolled duration.

APG 98 discusses the *Delayed Recovery (+2)* Advantage, a "Stop Sign" ability that extends the duration of a Flash from 1 Segment per BODY to 1 Turn per BODY. At the GM's option, characters can make Flashes last even longer for a cost of an additional +1 Advantage per step down the Time

Chart. The GM should evaluate all such abilities carefully, though, to prevent characters from unbalancing the campaign by buying inexpensive Flashes and then extending their duration for hours for very few Character Points.

Growth

If a character is larger than normal, or can become larger than normal by using Growth, and he wants to have a Damage Shield that covers his entire body, he needs to buy the Area Of Effect (Surface) to cover his entire size. Otherwise the Damage Shield only covers part of his body (which must be defined when he buys the power, and cannot be changed thereafter).

Hand-To-Hand Attack

If a character has an HA, he can perform a Multiple Attack with one or more Martial Maneuvers and add the HA damage to both of them. He pays the END cost for both the STR used and the HA for each attack.

Healing

As noted on 6E 232, a character can use Healing to restore Characteristics or Powers that “have been lost or reduced by any cause.” This includes Drain/Suppress when the points removed haven’t yet fully returned.

If a character buys Healing with the *Resurrection Only* (-½) Limitation, that Limitation apply just to the whole ability, including the Adder, not just to the base Power. A Healing power with Resurrection Only restores a character to 1 BODY at most (and possibly not even that much, depending on the Healing roll and how far into negative BODY the victim is). Once a character reaches 1 BODY he’s no longer dead or in any danger of dying, and therefore a Resurrection Only power can no longer apply to him.

If Healing has the *Can Heal Limbs* Adder, ordinarily it restores a fully functional limb as soon as all the damage suffered to the limb has been Healed. However, the GM might rule that “regrowing” a limb that was completely severed takes longer. Characters could also buy the Adder (not the base Power, just the Adder) with the *Extra Time* Limitation to indicate that it takes a significant period of time (hours, days, weeks, or more) to regrow a lost limb.

Images

Regardless of what Sense Groups an Image does or doesn’t affect, if a Desolidified character wants solid characters to perceive and be affected by his Images, the Images power must have the *Affects Physical World* (+2) Advantage. Without that Advantage he can still create the Images, but they’re obviously Images, and they’d obviously be “Desolidified” to anyone who perceived them, and thus can’t cause any harm or have any effect.

Invisibility

Activating Invisibility (Mental Group) does not “sever” or deactivate a Mind Link or voluntary mental contact via Telepathy, any more than being Invisible to the Hearing Group prevents a character from talking. However, just like an Invisible to Hearing character talking, using a Mind Link while Invisible to the Mental Sense Group may effectively negate the Invisibility. Just having the Mind Link active and ready for use doesn’t do this, but receiving or transmitting a mental communication does.

On the other hand, activating Invisibility (Mental Group) does cut off involuntary mental contact such as a Telepathy attack, Telepathic Mind Control, or a Mind Scan lock-on. However, if the attacker has Line Of Sight to the character, this is largely meaningless, since he can easily renew his mental attack on that basis.

Killing Attack

The standard *HERO System* rules allow a character to use his STR to increase the damage of his HKAs, as discussed on 6E1 241-42 and 6E2 99. But not all characters are strong, and there are many ways to improve the efficacy of one’s attacks. At the GM’s option, when a character buys an HKA he can declare which Characteristic adds damage to it in the same way STR does. Once he makes this choice, he can’t change it thereafter. Examples include:

- a light, sharp rapier that benefits from the user’s deftness (DEX adds damage)
- a deadly spell (INT adds damage)
- a lethal psionic assault (EGO adds damage)

In most cases characters should only be allowed to choose one of the main Characteristics for this, since they all have the same (or higher) cost as STR, all have Characteristic Rolls, and are all “active” game elements in some way. Allowing a character to choose, say, END could easily unbalance the game given how inexpensive END is.

If the GM allows this option, he can also choose to allow a new Advantage, *Multiple Characteristics*. For a +¼ Advantage, a character can define *two* Characteristics that can add damage to his HKA, and switch between them as a Zero Phase Action. For each additional +¼ Advantage

he can add another Characteristic to the list of possible choices.

However the GM chooses to implement these “alternate Characteristic” rules, they should be considered “Caution Sign” abilities.

D6-1 KILLING ATTACKS

Some Damage Classes of Killing Attack offer the choice of a half-die or a d6-1. For example 5 DCs of Killing Attack can be 1½d6 or 2d6-1. In this situation, whether a character is allowed to take the d6-1 option is up to the GM.

If a character rolls a d6-1 Killing Attack, the minimum amount he can roll is the number of dice rolled. For example, the minimum result of a Killing Attack 1d6-1 is 1; the minimum result of a Killing Attack 3d6-1 is 3.

Luck

Characters rarely buy Power Modifiers for the Luck Power, though there's no rule forbidding this. Here are a few guidelines for how Advantages and Limitations apply to Luck.

ADVANTAGES

The following Advantages are generally inapplicable to Luck: ACV, Area Of Effect (see below), Armor Piercing, AVAD, Autofire, Does BODY, Damage Over Time, Does Knockback, Double Knockback, Duration Advantages, Hole In The Middle, Indirect, Invisible Special Effects, Mega-Scale, NND, Penetrating, Personal Immunity, Range Advantages, Ranged, Reduced Endurance, Transdimensional, and Uncontrolled.

Affects Desolidified: This Power Advantage isn't necessary for Luck. The results of a Luck roll can already affect Desolidified characters (if appropriate), and he can already grant Usable By Other Luck to a Desolidified character normally.

A Desolidified character's Luck doesn't need the *Affects Physical World* Advantage to “rub off” on solid characters if he rolls four or more levels of Luck.

Area Of Effect: All forms of this Advantage, including Damage Shield, are inapplicable to Luck. If a character wants to allow other characters to use his Luck, he should take some form of the *Usable On Others* Advantage for the Power (see below), or buy four or more Luck dice so he can achieve enough levels of Luck for them to “cascade” down to other people.

Cumulative: At the GM's discretion, a character might be able to apply Cumulative to Luck to add the Luck dice together, instead of simply looking for sixes. Every six total points rolled equals one level of Luck. For example, ordinarily a roll of 3, 4, and 2 means no Luck effect, since the character didn't roll a 6 on any one die. With Cumulative, that roll equals one level of Luck, because the numbers add up to 6 or more. Had the dice rolled 4, 5, and 5, totalling 14, the character would have gotten two levels of Luck, since he got 12 total points' worth of effect. If the GM allows this,

characters cannot increase the maximum effect they can roll on the dice by buying additional +¼ Advantages.

Delayed Effect, Trigger: These Advantages might apply to lucky talismans, luck spells, potions of good fortune, and other such items.

Sticky: Ordinarily, only powers with a “physical special effect” can be made Sticky (see 6E1 345). However, at the GM's option, a character can apply this Advantage to Luck, so that anyone who comes into contact with him in the same Phase he succeeds with a Luck roll also receives the benefit of the roll. This could cause game balance problems, so GMs should be wary of allowing it. On the other hand, it can just easily benefit the character's enemies as his friends....

Time Limit: This Advantage might apply to Luck-granting spells in Fantasy games, or similar powers.

Usable On Others: Characters may apply Usable By Other, Usable Simultaneously, or Usable By Nearby to grant Luck to others, or create a form of Luck that affects several people at once. Luck Usable As Attack is possible, but since it only makes an opponent luckier, it's rarely (if ever) bought.

Variable Advantages: A character may apply this Advantage to Luck at the +¼ level to allow him to switch between any of the Advantages indicated here as being allowable for Luck.

Variable Special Effects: The outcome of a successful Luck roll can take many forms, involving many different physical objects or types of energy. Variable Special Effects isn't required because of this.

LIMITATIONS

Most Limitations can apply to Luck in the normal manner. Here are notes on some special applications:

Limited Power: 6E1 246 provides two example Luck powers that both include a *Limited Power* Limitation. Typically, a Limited Power applied to Luck restricts the times or places when the character can use his Luck. For example, a Luck-charm provided by faeries might only apply as long as the character remains in the enchanted forest, or a Luck-blessing from a god might only work while the character performs a specific mission for the god.

One interesting Limited Power specific to Luck is *Karmic* (-½). This signifies a form of Luck that depends on a character's good and proper conduct. The character has to have a specific code of conduct to follow, as defined by his player and GM; typically, these codes involving having to “perform good deeds” or otherwise act in a heroic fashion. As long as the character does what he's supposed to, he has “good karma” — his Luck works in the normal fashion. If he doesn't follow his code, or if he tries to skirt around its

restrictions, his Luck works less well: he may get to roll fewer Luck dice, or no dice at all, or he could even acquire some temporary Unluck!

Gamemasters should be wary about letting characters apply Limitations like *Self Only* or *Others Only* to Luck. The effects of Luck are often broad enough to benefit an entire group generally, even if a character only rolls three or fewer levels of Luck, so such Limitations often are not sufficiently restrictive to qualify as valid Limitations.

Requires A Skill Roll: APG 144 has rules for using Luck as a Required Skill Roll. In this case, typically the character can make the Luck roll whenever he wants to activate the power — but a successful roll simply activates the power, it doesn't also provide any Luck effect. If the character can only make the Luck roll when the GM allows (as is normally the case with Luck), he should get an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ value for the Limitation.

Side Effects: Unluck is a common Side Effect for Luck — if the character's not lucky, he's unlucky. That makes Luck a real gamble... but in some ways, that's the whole point.

Mental Illusions

As noted on 6E1 251, a Mental Illusion affects all of a target's Senses, even ones the character creating the illusion doesn't know about, because it's all in the target's head. Similarly, even if the creator assumes the target has Senses that he actually lacks, the Illusion "tailors itself" to the target's Senses. If the creator's aware that the target lacks certain Senses, he can create an Illusion that the target "perceives" with the missing Sense (perhaps to trick him into thinking that Sense has been restored), but in many (if not all) situations that's likely to make the target suspect trickery.

If the GM uses the optional rule on APG 107 that allows a Mental Illusion to perform a Presence Attack, with the maximum points of effect being equal to the Mental Illusions Effect Roll achieved, that Effect Roll includes the +10 points required to perform a Presence Attack.

Mind Control

If Mind Control has the *Based On CON* (-1) Limitation, the standard rules for issuing commands apply. That means it's possible for someone other than the character using Mind Control to shout out an order first — though this is unlikely. Generally speaking, when the power's first used, the character using the power is probably going to be the one who gets to issue the initial command, since he knows exactly when the power's taking effect. Beyond that point it's up to the GM to determine whether another character can "take control" by issuing new orders. Usually this won't work (if it did, it would make Based On CON Mind Control almost useless in many situations), but if the character controlling the victim tries to give him new orders or the like, that may

provide an opportunity for someone else to speak over him and take control. The GM might even use PRE Rolls, Presence Attacks, or the Social Combat rules in Chapter Three, to determine who's the dominant personality and allow him to issue the orders.

If a character's being Mind Controlled, making a Presence Attack to "Snap out of it, you're being Mind Controlled!" is treated as "helping a victim break free," as discussed on 6E1 257. However, the GM may require the Presence Attack to achieve a minimum level of effect (such as "half of the Mind Control's effect roll" or "equal to the Mind Control's effect roll") before this happens, or may lessen the impact of the Presence Attack if the character making it doesn't roll that well.

Mind Link

As noted in the rules, Mind Link requires a "receptive (willing)" mind. That means the "target" has to know about and accept the Link; it can't be "forced" on him.

As long as a Mind Link is "open" for communication, it can be perceived with Mental Awareness, whether it's actively being used to communicate or not at that particular moment. Buying Invisible Power Effects for the power would change that, of course, but being Invisible to the Mental Sense Group would not (any more than being Invisible to the Hearing Group prevents other people from overhearing your conversations).

As discussed on APG 95, Mental Awareness allows a character to perceive the "connection" between the character generating the Mind Link and the character Linked to him. That includes being able to identify who's generating the Mind Link and who's just in the Link, unless the GM rules otherwise based on special effects or other reasons.

Mind Scan

A character can use a Mental Power that's Based On CON through a sufficiently strong Mind Scan lock-on, unless some Limitation on the power indicates otherwise. For example, most Based On CON powers involve Foci of some kind, and thus can't be used through a lock-on.

Multiform

6E1 269 discusses the fact that STUN and BODY damage carry over from one form to another when a character changes forms. This can be dangerous to the character, and in some cases doesn't represent well what happens, given the special effects of some uses of Multiform. At the GM's option, characters can take the new Advantage *Separate Physical State* (+ $\frac{1}{2}$) for this Power. This Advantage "overrides" the "Changing Forms And Damage" rules on 6E1 269 so that each form tracks STUN, BODY, and END separately. However, when a character changes form back to

a form that's lost STUN, BODY, or END, he's still at that same level of STUN, BODY, or END — the form doesn't "heal" any, no matter how much time passes.

Object Creation

The ability to create objects "out of thin air" is a common special effect for various powers. For example, a wizard's Spell of Sword-Summoning is an HKA, Usable By Others, and an earth-manipulating superhero's power to create walls of rock is a form of Barrier. However, that sort of ability often causes problems when players want their characters to have the ability to create items that aren't easily defined in *HERO System* terms, or that, for all practical purposes, really don't require a rules-based definition — things like common household objects. Gamers seeking an easier way to create this sort of ability may want to consider this new optional Power, *Object Creation*.



OBJECT CREATION



Type:	Standard Power
Duration:	Instant
Target:	N/A
Range:	No Range
Costs END:	Yes
Cost:	20 Character Points to create any type of simple object of up to 2 PD/2 ED, 2 BODY; an additional +10 Character Points to create complex objects; an additional +10 Character Points to create extremely complex objects; +3 Character Points per +2 points of defense or +3 BODY; +5 Character Points for +1 cubic meter in size or 2x the number of objects.

A character with this Standard Power can create solid objects. Some examples of Object Creation include a wizard who can conjure useful items, a superhero who can transform air molecules into metals and other substances to create various items, and a starship's replication device that can transmute raw materials into various finished goods. Object Creation costs END to use.

BUYING OBJECT CREATION

For 20 Character Points, a character can create any type of simple object, with no moving or working parts, typically made of no more than one or two substances, of no more than one cubic meter in size, and with a maximum of 2 PD/2 ED (Resistant) and 2 BODY. Examples include a coffee mug, a thin board, a shrub, a backpack, or clothes.

For +10 Character Points, a character can create any type of object up to and including complex objects involving moving or working parts. Examples include a flush toilet, an internal combustion engine, a mechanical lock, or a marionette.

For +10 Character Points, a character can create any type of object up to and including

extremely complex objects involving moving or working parts. Examples include a starship hyperdrive, a computer, or an electronic lock.

The GM determines the complexity of a given object, and what level of Object Creation a character needs to create an object.

For +3 Character Points, the character may add up to +2 points of defense (either PD, ED, or both) or +3 BODY to the object. However, the object's BODY can never be more than twice its PD/ED (whichever's higher), and vice-versa, without GM's permission. (Of course, characters can create objects with less than the full PD/ED or BODY they've paid for; that just represents a maximum limit, not a requirement for every object they create.)

For +5 Character Points, the object can be up to +1 cubic meter larger, or the character can create two times as many objects simultaneously.

Once created, an object is permanent; it lasts until destroyed or used up. It cannot move (unless it's the sort of object that has some inherent movement ability, like a radio-controlled car), though a sufficiently strong character could carry it.

USING OBJECT CREATION

A character with Object Creation cannot create perfect duplicates of other objects; some flaws and differences are always readily detectable. At the GM's option, characters with an appropriate *Forgery Skill* can create duplicates good enough to pass as the real thing, though detailed testing or examination may still reveal them to be copies.

RESTRICTIONS ON OBJECT CREATION

Object Creation has one important restriction: *characters cannot use Object Creation to create objects when doing so could reasonably be considered the special effect of some other Power or ability.* This includes, generally speaking:

- any use of Object Creation that could directly or indirectly cause injury or harm (Object Creation is not an Attack Power)
- any use of Object Creation to create an object for which special design rules already exist (such as Automata, Computers, Vehicles, and Bases), because characters can easily determine a total Character Point cost for such items and "create" them as a special effect of Summon.

The key word here is "reasonably." Players and GMs shouldn't strain the definitions of other powers and effects to make a particular use of Object Creation invalid, when Object Creation provides a simple solution that doesn't unbalance or otherwise negatively affect the game. For example, a starship hyperdrive was listed above as an example of an object characters could create with Object Creation. While it's certainly easy to define a hyperdrive with Flight, FTL Travel, or other such powers, it may become complicated and tricky to determine how many people (or how much mass) the engine can move, and so forth. In appropriate situations, a GM may prefer to let

characters use Object Creation instead, and simply come up with the specifics of the engine himself.

Examples of things Object Creation *cannot* do include:

- create swords or other weapons (that's a special effect for various Attack Powers, Usable Simultaneously, OAF)
- create walls, bridges, or similar structures (that's done with Barrier)
- create a heavy object over a character's head so that it falls and crushes him (that's a special effect for various Attack Powers, Indirect)
- create a heavy object right in front of a moving character so he collides with it (that's a special effect for various Attack Powers)
- create food and drink (that's a special effect for Life Support [Diminished Eating], Usable By Others)
- create a pit full of sharp spikes (that's a special effect for a Limited form of RKA)
- create a car or a house (that's a special effect for Summon, because the *HERO System* has rules for establishing the Character Point cost of Vehicles and Bases)
- create items of great value, such as gemstones, jewelry, or works of art (that's a special effect for the *Money Perk*)
- create living beings (that's a special effect for Summon)
- create a tool or object that makes it easier to perform a particular Skill or task (that's a special effect for Skill Levels and/or bonuses to a Skill Roll, OAF)

The GM may grant a character permission to violate these restrictions, on a case-by-case basis, if he feels doing so won't unbalance the game. For example, although it's not normally permissible to create items of great value, a GM might allow a character to create fabulous and exotic suits of clothes, since they're not readily converted to money and the player can have a lot of fun role-playing his character's "Clothes Horse" power.

Generally speaking, Object Creation is intended for non-combat uses. In most cases characters shouldn't be allowed to create objects that have clear value in combat or crisis situations (weapons, defensive gear, sensory/communications equipment, and the like) using Object Creation; they should build them using other appropriate Powers and Power Modifiers. Nor can Object Creation be used as an attack (for example, by creating poison inside someone's body). Object Creation is primarily intended to create mundane, everyday objects in noncombat situations (though the GM may waive this restriction in the interest of common sense, dramatic sense, or ease of game play, of course). As a good rule of thumb, if an object is one the GM wouldn't require characters to spend Character Points to possess, then it's

probably all right to allow characters to create that object with Object Creation.

POWERS

If you choose to use the *Object Creation* Power, you should make certain changes to other Powers:

Summon: Summon remains useful for "creating" living or mobile beings, objects with defined Character Point costs (such as Vehicles), and the like. The GM may need to evaluate a particular power carefully to determine whether Object Creation or Summon is the most appropriate way to build the ability in game terms.

Transform: Transform can no longer "create objects out of thin air"; that becomes a function of Object Creation.

ADVANTAGES

Area Of Effect: Characters cannot apply this Advantage to Object Creation; the Power already has its own rules for increasing the size of created objects.

Autofire: Characters cannot apply Autofire to Object Creation.

Configurable (+¼): Ordinarily a character cannot increase the BODY, defenses, or size of an object he creates beyond the maximum BODY, PD, and ED he's paid for. He can create one with less BODY or defenses, or that's smaller than his maximum size, of course, but cannot increase those parameters. However, this Advantage allows a character to "re-allocate" the points spent to buy increased BODY, defenses, or size from use to use. For example, suppose that a character buys Object Creation (extremely complex objects), up to 6 PD/6 ED, up to 8 BODY, up to 8 cubic meters/8 objects. Thus, he's spent 27 points on BODY, defenses, and size. If this power's Configurable, he can "re-allocate" those 27 points to, for example, create a single very sturdy object, or hundreds of small objects, or whatever else he wants — as long as the points spent for BODY, defenses, and size don't exceed 27.

MegaScale: With the GM's permission, characters may apply MegaScale to Object Creation, thus allowing them to create enormous objects without having to spend hundreds of points to increase the object's size through the usual method.

Ranged: Characters may apply this Advantage to Object Creation so they can create objects away from themselves. This does not eliminate the rule that says characters cannot use Object Creation to directly or indirectly harm another character.

LIMITATIONS

Copier (-½): This Limitation represents a form of Object Creation that requires the character to have a "model" to work from. He can't create a perfect duplicate of the model (as discussed in the rules above), but he has to have the model in his possession to create another such object. (At the GM's

option, if the character can create an object based on just a picture, reduce the value of this Limitation to $-\frac{1}{4}$.)

Limited Type Of Objects ($-\frac{1}{4}$ to -1): Object Creation with this Limitation can only create certain types of objects. If the group is Slightly Limited (any technological device, any non-technological object), the Limitation is worth $-\frac{1}{4}$. If it's Limited (mechanical devices, any stone object), the Limitation is worth $-\frac{1}{2}$. If it's Very Limited (clocks, stone chairs), the Limitation is worth -1 .

Requires A Roll: Characters don't have to have a relevant Skill to use Object Creation (for example, a character can create an engine without having Mechanics). A character who wants to impose such a requirement on his Object Creation power can take the *Requires A Skill Roll* Limitation for it.

Restricted Lifespan (varies): As noted in the text, items created with Object Creation are permanent; they exist until destroyed or used up. If Object Creation has this Limitation, objects created with it have a much more finite lifespan. The GM determines the object's ordinary lifespan — the time before it would collapse, crumble to dust, or otherwise become useless or worthless. For each step up the Time Chart above 1 Year by which the character restricts the object's lifespan, the power gets a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation (maximum of -2). For example, if a character created a stone chair with Object Creation that crumbles away to dust after 20 Minutes, that's seven steps up the Time Chart, which is worth a $-1\frac{3}{4}$ Limitation.

The GM may forbid characters to apply this Limitation to Object Creation if he feels it does not significantly restrict the Power. Many uses of Object Creation are to create objects needed immediately or for a short time — they don't have to last very long. In that case this Limitation is probably inappropriate.

Probability Alteration

The *Luck* Power represents how fortune can favor a character, and the Heroic Action Points rules can give characters even more control over their own fates. However, some characters may want to exert more direct control over probability, luck, and their own destinies (particularly in campaigns that don't use the HAP rules). The following optional new Power, *Probability Alteration*, provides a way for them to do so.



PROBABILITY ALTERATION

Type:	Special Power
Duration:	Instant
Target:	Self Only
Range:	Self
Costs END:	Yes
Cost:	5 Character Points for the ability to re-roll one roll per day; +5 Character Points per additional re-roll

A character with this Special Power has the ability to alter probabilities affecting him, making it more likely he will succeed at tasks. Some examples of Probability Alteration include a mutant superhero's extraordinary super-luck, a wizard's power to alter fate with a spell, or a Pulp adventurer's unending string of "lucky breaks." Probability Alteration costs END to use.

Probability Alteration costs 5 Character Points. It allows a character to re-roll any one roll per day of game time. A character may re-roll any roll — a Skill Roll, Characteristic Roll, PER Roll, Attack Roll, damage roll, Effect Roll, or the like — unless the GM specifically forbids the character to apply the Power to a given roll for some reason. For each additional +5 Character Points, the character may re-roll one more roll during the day. (The GM may establish restrictions on how many re-rolls a character can have per session, and special Power Modifiers, described below, reduce or increase the timeframe restricting use of Probability Alteration.)

Every roll a character makes counts as a separate and distinct roll for purposes of being modified with Probability Alteration. For example:

- for a Killing Attack, the Attack Roll, BODY damage roll, and STUN Multiplier roll are all separate rolls
- if a character wants to make a Complementary Skill roll, both the roll for the Complementary Skill, and the roll for the Skill the character wants to use, are separate rolls (a character cannot use Probability Alteration to modify a Complementary Skill roll made by another character on his behalf unless his Probability Alteration is Usable On Others, but he could still modify his own roll)

- if several characters make Teamwork rolls, each roll counts as a separate roll

Using Probability Alteration is an action which takes no time. A character must declare that he wants to use it immediately after the roll in question is made, before the effects of that roll are applied to a character or otherwise brought into play.

A character using Probability Alteration must accept the second roll made, regardless of whether it's better or worse for him than the first roll — the fates aren't always kind. However, a character who has more than one re-roll per game session may use additional re-rolls to take a third, fourth, or further try at getting the result he wants on a given roll.

ADVANTAGES

Always Favorable (+1, +2): Probability Alteration with this Advantage always favors the character using it. For a +1 Advantage, if the re-roll creates a worse result for him than the original roll, he may use the original roll instead. For a +2 Advantage, the character's re-roll must be better than the original roll; if it is not, he may keep re-rolling (without using up any additional re-rolls he's bought) until he gets a better result.

If this Advantage is applied to Probability Alteration Usable As Attack (see below), reverse the effects: for a +1 Advantage, the target has to use the worse of the two rolls; for a +2 Advantage, the target has to keep rolling until he gets a result worse than the original roll.

Area Of Effect, Autofire: Characters cannot apply either of these Advantages to Probability Alteration; see *Usable By Others*, below, for information on affecting multiple persons with this Power.

Constant: Characters cannot apply this Advantage to Probability Alteration.

Decreased Re-Use Duration (varies): The default rule is that a character can only use Probability Alteration once per Day (24 hours) per reroll purchased. For a +½ Advantage, *Decreased Re-use Duration*, the time between uses of Probability Alteration moves one level up on the Time Chart (to 6 Hours, 1 Hour, and so on). However, characters cannot buy Probability Alteration to be used more frequently than per Turn. For example, to be able to make one re-roll (or however many re-rolls the character purchased) every 5 Minutes would be a +2 Advantage.

Invisible Power Effects: Probability Alteration is an Inobvious Power — sometimes characters notice how lucky the character seems to be. However, a character can buy it with Invisible Power Effects so that other people somehow don't associate all the "lucky breaks" he experiences with him directly.

Usable By Others: Characters often apply the *Usable By Others* Advantage to this Power to create the ability to influence the probabilities affecting other characters. If bought with Usable By Other, the character can grant a re-roll to another character if that character wants it. This does not, however, change the overall number of re-rolls a character can make per session — every one re-roll he grants another character is one less he can make himself. Characters cannot buy Probability Alteration as Usable Simultaneously, since only one character ever makes a given roll. (At the GM's option, a character might be able to apply Usable Simultaneously and affect one roll by each of several persons during the Phase in which he activates the power.)

Probability Alteration with Usable As Attack allows a character (if he succeeds with an Attack Roll, per normal for such powers) to force another character to re-roll a roll he succeeded at. In this case the Target becomes "Target's DCV," and the

Power's Range becomes "No Range." Typically the defense against such an attack is having Luck, Probability Alteration, or Power Defense.

LIMITATIONS

Charges: Characters should not take this Limitation on Probability Alteration without the GM's permission. The power already defines the number of rolls a character can make in a specific time period. The GM might, however, allow a character with multiple re-rolls per game session to apply Charges to restrict how many times the character can make re-rolls during each game day, or allow Charges with Burnout.

Increased Re-Use Duration (varies): The default rule is that a character can only use Probability Alteration once per Day (24 hours) per reroll purchased. For a -½ Limitation, *Increased Re-use Duration*, the time between uses of Probability Alteration moves one level down the Time Chart (to 1 Week, 1 Month, and so on). For example, to be able to make one re-roll (or however many re-rolls the character purchased) every Month would be a -1 Limitation.

Reflection

If a character has Reflection that applies to a Ranged attack, typically he still suffers the standard penalties for trying to Reflect that attack barehanded. Just because a character's bought Reflection doesn't necessarily mean it changes any of the standard rules pertaining to Blocking Ranged attacks. However, a GM could certainly rule that it did, in light of special effects or other considerations, or he could allow a character to buy appropriate Combat Skill Levels to negate the penalties.

Characters cannot use Ranged Martial Maneuvers with a Reflected attack. All Reflection does is allow the character to Reflect the attack made against him; he can't change that attack or make any other use out of it. However, the GM could certainly allow this sort of thing if he wanted; it might be a fun option for a high-powered, over-the-top action sort of campaign.

Regeneration

A character with Regeneration could get hit with a Drain BODY whose return rate has been extended beyond the time period of the character's Regeneration. In this case the Regeneration still applies and allows the character to regain the lost BODY as normal for Regeneration, regardless of the specified Delayed Return Rate of the Drain.

If a character buys Regeneration with the *Resurrection Only* (-2) Limitation, that Limitation apply just to the whole ability, including the

Adder, not just to the base Power. A Regeneration power with Resurrection Only restores a character to 1 BODY. Once a character reaches 1 BODY he's no longer dead or in any danger of dying, and therefore a Resurrection Only power can no longer apply to him.

If Regeneration has the *Can Heal Limbs* Adder, ordinarily it restores a fully functional limb as soon as all the damage suffered to the limb has been Regenerated. However, the GM might rule that "regrowing" a limb that was completely severed takes longer. Characters could also buy the Adder (not the base Power, just the Adder) with the *Extra Time* Limitation to indicate that it takes a significant period of time (hours, days, weeks, or more) to regrow a lost limb.

Resistant Protection

If a character wants to buy just 1 point of Resistant Protection, the cost is 2 Character Points.

When a character uses an Adjustment Power on Resistant Protection, the Character Points added/removed are applied to the power as a whole. The value of the defenses provided by the Resistant Protection are then recalculated, maintaining their standard ratio as closely as possible.

Example: *Ultratech has a force-field defined as Resistant Protection (8 PD/8 ED) (24 Active Points). If he's attacked with a Drain Resistant Protection 3d6 that rolls 9 points of effect (reducing the power to 15 Active Points), his force-field is temporarily reduced to 5 PD/5 ED.*

Later Ultratech earns some Experience Points and increases his force-field to Resistant Protection (10 PD/12 ED/6 Power Defense) (42 Active Points). Another character uses Aid Resistant Protection 4d6 on him, adding 9 points of effect (to "51 Active Points"). The GM rules that this increases the Resistant Protection to 12 PD/14 ED/8 Power Defense.

In some cases an Adjustment Power may be more precisely defined — such as Drain Resistant Protection ED 3d6, or Aid PD 5d6, Variable Effect (any sort of PD). In that case only the relevant part of the Resistant Protection is affected; the rest is not.

Running

If a character buys Running that's Usable As Flight (+¼), he cannot just stand still in mid-air and take a Recovery. As stated on 6E1 227, a character has to pay a minimum of 1 END to hover, and spending END prevents him from Recovering.

Skills

A Skill bought as a Power is considered Obvious in the same sense that Body-Affecting Powers and Size Powers are (*i.e.*, they don't typically produce a visible glow or anything like that, but their effect on the user, target, and so on is Obvious). Of course, if common sense dictates otherwise for a particular Skill (for example, Stealth as a Power would be useless if it were Obvious), the GM can easily declare that Skill to be Inobvious or Invisible.

If a character wants to buy Martial Arts with a Limitation, as described on 6E1 283, he should buy each Martial Maneuver individually, applying the Limitation to reduce its cost. (Note, however, that characters can't apply Limitations to Extra DCs, per 6E2 92; the same applies to Weapon Elements.)

Stretching

Characters can apply MegaScale to Stretching, though of course they should have a good rationale for doing so (not to mention the GM's permission). The villain Astron in *Champions Beyond* provides an example.

Summon

Summon can have the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain) Limitation. If the character stops paying END, the Summoned being vanishes/is freed from control/returns home/whatever at the end of that Segment. Paying an END maintenance cost does not in any way increase the effectiveness of, or improve, a Summon power.

Swimming

Characters outside the water may need to dive into it when they want to use their Swimming. As long as the character is on the same level as the surface of the water, diving is a simple matter. But if he's above the water, it may be more difficult... even potentially dangerous. A character can safely Dive a number of meters equal to his meters of Swimming or 8m, whichever is greater. All meters beyond that are treated like Falling and thus may inflict damage on the character.

Takes No STUN

If a character has Growth or Density Increase and the Automaton Power *Takes No STUN*, divide the extra points of PD/ED gained from DI or Growth by 3.

If an Automaton with the *Takes No STUN* Power obtains defensive equipment (such as a suit of armor), he must divide the PD/ED that equipment provides by 3, the same way he does for a defensive ability he purchases with Character Points.

Telekinesis

The Adding Damage rules apply to Telekinesis in the standard way. Thus, Telekinesis (STR 40), which costs 60 Active Points, has 12 DCs for purposes of adding damage to it. However, the GM can rule that the DCs of Telekinesis are based on the STR used rather than the Active Points, if he feels that's more consistent and/or won't cause game problems.

The strength of local gravity, or even zero gravity, doesn't affect how Telekinesis works, absent some Limitation or GM's ruling to the contrary.

TELEKINESIS AND COMBAT/MARTIAL MANEUVERS

As noted on 6E1 295, characters who want to use most Combat Maneuvers with Telekinesis have to pay for that privilege, at the cost of 3 Character Points per Maneuver. Here's some more information on this:

Block, Club Weapon, Dodge, Roll With A Punch:

Generally speaking these Maneuvers can't be used with Telekinesis, so spending Character Points to "buy" them is useless. However, the GM might rule that if a character spends 3 Character Points to "buy" Block that he can Block Ranged attacks or weapon-based attacks without suffering any OCV penalty.

Brace, Cover, Haymaker, Hipshot, Pulling A

Punch, Set: Characters may Haymaker their Telekinesis without having to pay Character Points to "buy" the Maneuver. They can also Brace and/or Set when using Telekinesis, Cover a target with Telekinesis, Hipshot with Telekinesis, or Pull his Telekinesis Punch without having to "buy" those Maneuvers.

Choke, Disarm, Shove, Snap Shot, Strafe,

Suppression Fire, Trip: Characters must spend Character Points to "buy" these Combat Maneuvers for use with Telekinesis.

Grab, Strike ("punch"), Throw: Characters may perform these Maneuvers with Telekinesis "for free"; they don't have to pay for them.

Move By, Move Through: Characters cannot perform these Maneuvers with Telekinesis, so spending Character Points to "buy" them is useless.

If the GM uses some of the optional new Combat Maneuvers in APG, Blazing Away, Interference, and Hurry cost Character Points to use with Telekinesis; characters cannot perform Disarm Bys with Telekinesis.

Unless the GM prefers otherwise, a character cannot use Combat Skill Levels with regular Martial Arts or All HTH Combat when attacking with a Martial Maneuver via Telekinesis. Combat Skill Levels bought specifically for Telekinetic Martial Maneuver Attacks, or at the GM's option

with Ranged Martial Arts or All Ranged Attacks, could be.

6E1 296 notes that if a character uses Telekinesis to Grab or Strike over an Area Of Effect, his full Telekinesis STR/damage applies to each target. The same logic applies to other Combat/Martial Maneuvers used over an Area Of Effect, unless the GM rules otherwise for some reason.

If a character has Telekinesis, and he buys a naked Advantage for it, generally speaking that Advantage applies (if he wants to use it) whenever he uses Telekinesis to perform any Combat Maneuver (either ones he can freely perform, or ones he's paid Character Points to be able to perform). The use of a paid Combat Maneuver doesn't affect the cost calculation of the naked Advantage. The GM, of course, can change any of this if he prefers or believes it's necessary to maintain game balance.

Telepathy

When a character uses Telepathy on a target to search for specific memories or other information, the target doesn't know which facts his attacker's seeking. A target who's attacked with Telepathy knows that he's being attacked with Telepathy (unless, of course, the attacker declares and achieves the +20 Effect Roll modifier to hide it, or the Telepathy has the right form of Invisible Power Effects). But he doesn't know what facts, if any, the attacker is looking for and/or has found. At the GM's option, Telepathy that reveals to the target what facts have been searched for and/or found may take a -¼ Limitation, *Known Search*.

Teleportation

If a character declares that he's using Noncombat Teleportation, and then is Stunned or Knocked Out before his extra Phase occurs, he does not Teleport. Being Stunned or Knocked Out "interrupts" his action. At the GM's option, other factors, such as being Knocked Back, may have the same effect even if the character's not Stunned or Knocked Out.

GATES

The number of characters able to use a Gate at once depends on how the Gate's built. A Gate has to be bought with some form of Usable On Others — either Usable By Other or Usable Simultaneously (most often the latter). The value of the Advantage defines how many people can use the Gate simultaneously; it's certainly possible (though rare) for someone to make a Gate that thousands of people could go through at a time (though that would require the Gate to be pretty large and to be able to handle a lot of Increased Mass).

The mass limit for a Gate defines the mass of any given person or object that can move through the Gate. It's not a per-Segment restriction, it's a per-person (or object) restriction.

RESTRICTED-USE GATES

Normally, anyone can use a Gate. At the GM's option, a character can create a Gate that only certain persons can use. If only a small group (up to eight people, typically with something in common, like being on the same team or in the same family) can use the Gate, this is an additional +½ Advantage; if a larger group of people can use it (such as all members of a particular species or cult), it's an additional +¼ Advantage.

These values are based on the concept that it's tactically advantageous for a group of Player Characters to have a Gate only they can use. If restricting the Gate to a larger group has significant benefits — for example, to create a Gate that only Humans can use during the Human-Denebian Wars — then the GM may want to change the values. In that case a Gate that only a few Human soldiers can use may be far less helpful than one any Human soldier can use.



Time Powers

There are many ways to represent the ability to manipulate (or even stop) the flow of time in the *HERO System*, including such Powers as Aid, Drain, Entangle, and Extra-Dimensional Movement. However, creating some types of classic time-manipulating powers require such complex and/or expensive constructions that it's difficult (if not impossible) for Player Characters to use them.

The following two Powers are intended to overcome this difficulty by providing much simpler rules for stopping or changing time. Obviously these are “Stop Sign” Powers, since either or both of them could wreak havoc with campaign balance — check with the GM before purchasing them for a character. Both are Special Powers and also belong to the new category of Time Powers.

Additionally, see the *Speed Zone* section of Chapter Three. You could use the Speed Zone rules to represent the ability to slow the passage of time to the point where the character using the power seems to be moving incredibly quickly.

TIME STOP

Type:	Special Power/Time Power
Duration:	Constant
Target:	Special
Range:	No Range
Costs END:	Yes
Cost:	200 Character Points

A character with this Time Power has the ability to stop time throughout Reality. Some examples of Time Stop include a time traveler's chrono-technology or a powerful wizard's “Stop Time” spell. Time Stop costs END to use (the GM has to track “phantom Phases” while time

is stopped to determine how much END the character spends maintaining the Power).

USING TIME STOP

When a character activates Time Stop, time stops flowing throughout all Reality, which means all activities and actions also stop in mid-second. This includes:

- people and vehicles stop moving. If they're in mid-air they don't fall; if they're in the water they don't sink; if they're in outer space Newtonian motion ceases. They're literally frozen in place.
- falling people and objects stop falling; they're suspended in mid-air for the duration of the power.
- all energetic reactions are “frozen” in mid-reaction. Stars and fires stop burning (they don't go out, they're “frozen” mid-burn), energy beams stop moving toward their targets, boiling water is “frozen” in mid-bubble, light stops moving, gravity has no effect.
- ongoing physical conditions and processes cease functioning. If a person is bleeding from an injury, the blood stops flowing while time is stopped; similarly, poisons and diseases stop coursing through a living body. Avalanches and earthquakes halt in mid-rumble, storms in mid-thunderbolt.
- living beings cease to perceive things; they have no awareness that time's been stopped (see below). They also don't age, become hungry, catch diseases, or the like. The only thing that can affect them is the character using Time Stop (see below).

The only person who's immune to these effects is the character using Time Stop. He can move around freely using his standard movement abilities (and if he was falling when he used the power, he continues to fall). He can touch (or even harm) time-stopped people and objects without “freeing” them from the effect. He can touch harmful things (like a “frozen” fire or laser bolt) without suffering any harm. (However, if he's affected by an ongoing internal phenomenon, like a poison, disease, and most Damage Over Time or Uncontrolled powers, inflicted upon him before he stopped time, that continues to affect him.) He can move people or objects (provided he's strong enough to lift and carry them, of course). Although he can't be harmed by anything, he continues to age at the standard rate of one second per second.

While time is stopped, the character using Time Stop can take any action he could normally take during the regular flow of time. He pays END for those actions at the usual rate in addition to the END cost for Time Stop itself. (Even though the character is “outside time,” the GM should track “phantom Phases” for purposes of END expenditure and such.) For example, he could:

- slit an enemy's throat so he starts bleeding to death as soon as time starts again.

- crush an enemy's skull or stab him in the heart so that he dies as soon as time starts again
- disarm an enemy and then tie him up
- move or re-arrange people and objects (to, for example, make someone attack a different target or prevent a person from being hit by a car)

When a character stops using Time Stop, living beings aren't aware of the fact someone just stopped time. As long as time remains stopped, they remain oblivious; when the character turns time back on, they don't even realize the merest picosecond has passed. Any changes the character using Time Stop made appear to them to have instantly (and perhaps inexplicably) occurred.

POWERS

Desolidification: Being Desolidified does not render a character immune to Time Stop — Desolidified characters exist in Time, and thus when Time is Stopped, the stoppage affects them just as much as it affects solid characters.

Duplication: If a character uses Time Stop, any Duplicates of him are not immune to the effects — they're frozen in time, leaving only him (be he the original character or a Duplicate himself) free. However, if he buys the *Personal Immunity* (+¼) Advantage for his Time Stop, then his Duplicates also aren't affected by Time Stop.

Life Support: SH 261 suggests the possibility of time travelers buying *Life Support* (*Immunity to Time Shifts*) for 2 Character Points to avoid the effects of altering the time-stream. In a campaign where Time Stop is often used, or where ultra-powerful cosmic entities are immune to its effects, the GM might allow characters to buy *Immunity* (*Time Stop*) as a 3 Character Point form of Immunity.

ADVANTAGES

Transdimensional: Time Stop is described as working throughout "Reality." In campaigns that feature multiple dimensions, the GM needs to decide whether "Reality" includes the entire Multiverse, or just the single dimension the character's in when he uses the Power. If Time Stop only affects one dimension, then characters in other dimensions can attack (or otherwise affect) Time Stopped characters/objects by using Transdimensional powers from another dimension.

Usable On Other: With the GM's permission, a character can apply this Advantage to Time Stop not to grant other characters the ability to stop time, but to be able to make them "immune" to the time stoppage the way he is. He buys Usable Simultaneously, and when he uses Time Stop one of the recipients is always himself. After he uses Time Stop, he can then touch other characters to "free" them from the effect the way he's free of it (up to the limit of the number of characters bought via the Advantage).

LIMITATIONS

A character cannot buy Time Stop with Limitations like *Only To Protect Myself* so that he "stops time" only to render himself immune to all damage. In general, the GM shouldn't let characters buy any form of Time Stop that "partly" stops time; stopping time is by and large an all-or-nothing sort of effect.

Limited Area (varies): Some characters may only want to be able to stop time throughout a small area rather than all Reality. See the accompanying table for suggested Limitation values. However, those values assume the campaign setting is of fairly typical scale — a continent, perhaps even an entire planet. In campaigns that routinely cover far greater areas, the GM should adjust the values accordingly to allow characters to affect meaningful amounts of the setting with Time Stop. Conversely, in campaigns which never leave a small area (such as a single city), the GM should adjust the values, since a Time Stop large enough to cover the entire campaign setting isn't really "Limited" in any way.

A character who enters a Time Stop "field" from the unaffected parts of Reality instantly becomes subject to Time Stop. An attack fired into the Time Stop "field" from outside it becomes Time Stopped as soon as it enters the field, but continues functioning as soon as the field is turned off (and thus may hit its intended target).

It's up to the GM to determine the campaign implications (and in some cases rules implications) of only stopping time in a small area. The overall effect on the setting as a whole could be trivial, or it could unravel the fabric of space-time. Done in a small area (such as a "cold sleep" capsule) it probably won't disrupt Reality too much, but if one city or planet stops while the rest of the world keeps advancing, the ultimate consequences could be dire.

With the GM's permission, a character can define the -2 value of Limited Area as "Self Only" or only affecting a single target (though the GM should be sure that this doesn't violate the rule against buying a "partial" Time Stop only to protect the character). In this case, the character must define a condition that causes Time Stop to cease functioning — either the passage of a specified amount of time (from the perspective of an



LIMITED AREA TIME STOP

Value	Area Affected
-2	Up to 10m radius
-1¾	11-100m radius
-1½	101m-1 km radius
-1¼	1.1-10 km radius
-1	10.1-100 km radius
-¾	100.1-1,000 km radius
-½	1,000.1-10,000 km radius
-¼	10,000.1 km or greater radius

unaffected character, of course) or the occurrence of some sort of event the character could detect with his Senses (such as “when the fire stops burning”).

Perceivable: Taking this Limitation for Time Stop means everyone subjected to it realizes Time was Stopped after the character stops using the Power. They’re not aware of it while it’s happening (the character can’t torture people by keeping them knowingly time-frozen), but they become aware of what was done to them when the effect ends.

Slow Time (varies): With the GM’s permission a character can apply this Limitation to Time Stop so that it merely *slows* the passage of time, instead of stopping it outright. The accompanying table describes the effects and suggested Limitation values.

SLOW TIME

Value	Effect
-2	Actions take twice as long (a Half Phase Action requires a Full Phase, a Full Phase Action requires two Phases, an hour-long task requires two hours, and so on)
-1¾	Actions take 3-4 four times as long (a Half Phase Action requires two Full Phases, a Full Phase Action requires four Full Phases, a 1 Turn-long task takes four Turns, and so on)
-1½	Actions take 5-8 times as long
-1¼	Actions take 9-16 times as long
-1	Actions take 17-32 times as long
-¾	Actions take 33-64 times as long
-½	Actions take 65-125 times as long
-¼	Actions take 126 or more times as long

REPLAY

Type:	Special Power/Time Power
Duration:	Instant
Target:	Special
Range:	No Range
Costs END:	Yes
Cost:	30 Character Points to Replay one Segment, plus an additional +30 Character Points for each step down the Time Chart thereafter

This Time Power allows a character to “rewind” or “replay” a portion of time in his recent past, undoing anything that was done or occurred during that portion of time. Examples include a superhero’s mutant power to cause the last ten seconds of time to recur, a time traveler’s ability to easily journey back a mere hour in time, or a wizard’s spell that allows him to step back in time and “try over” actions that didn’t turn out as he’d hoped. Replay costs END to use (see below).

BUYING REPLAY

The base cost of Replay depends on how great a span of time the character can “rewind”: 30 Character Points to Replay one Segment, plus an additional +30 Character Points for each step down the Time Chart thereafter (thus, a total of 60 Character Points for 1 Phase, 90 Character Points for 1 Turn, 120 Character Points for 1 Minute, and so on).

USING REPLAY

When a character activates Replay, time is stopped and immediately “reversed” to whatever point in time he chooses, up to his maximum. For example, a character who can Replay up to the past 20 Minutes of time could choose to Replay the full 20 minutes, or just 36 seconds, or five and a half minutes — any amount up to 20 minutes.

The Replay time limit counts back from the instant the character uses the Power. For example, a character with Replay (20 Minutes) can’t choose to Replay a period of 20 Minutes that happened two hours ago; he can only Replay the immediate past 20 Minutes he just experienced. If he has enough Replay to go back two hours, he could Replay that 20 Minute period, but time would then run normally from there, forcing him to relive the entire two hours.

When a character Replays time, all Reality returns to its former state as of the point in time he chooses to “return” to. This includes:

- injuries suffered by characters, damage suffered by objects, and other such “negative consequences” are instantly “healed,” returning the character/object to its former condition as of the designated point in time. All STUN, BODY, END, and Charges lost or used during the Replayed portion of time return to their former totals. Conversely, if a character experienced a positive action or consequence of some sort during the Replayed frame of time — someone

healed an existing injury or Aided his DEX, for example — that's also undone.

- any aging experienced by characters is “undone” back to whatever age they were as of the designated point in time.
- people, vehicles, and moving objects move back to whatever position they were in as of the designated point in time.
- ongoing physical conditions and processes return to their former state as of the designated point in time. For example, Replaying time to a point before it began raining stops it from raining (but of course, it starts to rain again when time reaches the proper point after it starts flowing over again).

There's only one change Replay can't undo: the END spent on Replay itself. When a character uses Replay, he returns to however much END he had as of his declared “starting point,” minus the END spent to use Replay. If this causes him to sink into negative END and the GM has to roll for him to spend STUN in place of END, that STUN damage also isn't “reversed” by the Replay.

Example: *MetaMan has Post-Segment 12 Flashback, the power to Replay the past 12 seconds of time. He and his teammates, the Crimeslashers, blast their way into the Ultimates' base to confront the evil villains. However, after one Turn of combat things haven't gone well: Binder has Entangled Protostar and the Gunsmith, Blackstar has thrown Irongirl across the room and into a pillar, Knocking her Out, Diode has suffered serious injuries (-28 STUN, -7 BODY) from Cyclone's and Orion's attacks, and MetaMan himself is trapped in one of Slick's friction manipulation fields. Deciding he'd rather try this all over again, MetaMan activates his Replay ability.*

Suddenly time reverses to the point where the heroes burst into the Ultimates' lair. MetaMan, Protostar, and the Gunsmith are all free of the Entangles. The END MetaMan and Protostar spent on their abilities “returns” to them (except for the 9 END MetaMan spent using Replay), and the bullets the Gunsmith fired (the Charges he used) “return” to him as well. Irongirl is no longer Knocked Out (she's back to the full STUN she started the combat with), and Diode's lost STUN and BODY have been fully “healed” as well. All five heroes are now standing where they were when they entered the room. Similarly, all the Ultimates have been fully “healed” and returned to their starting positions. Time for Round 2....

Once a period of time is Replayed, actions proceed normally. All affected characters recall what happened in any previous “iterations” of that period of time, and can remember what actions occurred, how effective they were, and so forth. They can attempt those same actions again if they prefer (though of course they have to make new rolls, so actions that succeeded one time may not succeed again), or they can attempt different ones.

When a character activates Replay, he (and everyone else affected, of course) returns to the specified moment in time in the condition he was in when that moment in time first existed/occurred. Intermediate states of being don't affect him. For example, suppose a character has Replay (1 Hour). He wants to Replay the past hour of time. During that hour, he was Knocked Out twice, lost 3 BODY from attacks, and was Mind Controlled for one minute. Since none of those conditions (being Knocked Out, lost BODY, being Mind Controlled) affected him at the beginning of the 1 Hour, they have no effect on him when he Replays time. He doesn't end up at the “starting point” Knocked Out, having lost BODY, or being Mind Controlled, since none of those things had affected him as of that point in time.

Unless the GM rules otherwise, a character can use Replay to repeat the same period of time as often as he wants. For example, if a character has Replay (1 Hour), he could Replay the past hour dozens of times until events turn out the way he wants them to. Or he could Replay 10 minutes one time, then the whole hour the next time, then 27 minutes, and so on — he just can't Replay further back than an hour from when he activates the power.

Depending on how long a period of time is involved, Replay can have significant effects on the environment (not to mention characters). For example, Replaying a few seconds could stop an avalanche or merely repeat part of it, depending on when the Power's used in relation to when the avalanche started. The longer a period of time a character can Replay, the greater his power over the setting... and the campaign.

Obviously Replay can have serious repercussions for game play — characters could use it to literally “redo” nearly any actions again and again until they get an outcome they want, causing what would have been a single brief combat to take hours and hours to resolve. Thus, this power requires close GM oversight and control. For example, the GM might rule that any given portion of time can only be Replayed once, or he might impose other restrictions (like a higher END cost) to make it clear to characters that the Power shouldn't be used casually.

POWERS

Desolidification: Being Desolidified does not render a character immune to Replay — Desolidified characters exist in Time, and thus when Time is Replayed, the “rewind” affects them just as much as it affects solid characters.

Time Stop: A character who's trapped in Time Stop cannot use Replay to “get out of” the Time Stop effect — Time is stopped for him, and thus he can't use any of his powers or abilities, including Replay.

ADVANTAGES

Invisible Power Effects: Ordinarily the character using Replay and all affected characters are aware that time's been Replayed, and they remember what happened in all previous "iterations" of that period of time. However, if a character buys his Replay with Invisible Power Effects at the +½ level, only he remembers any previous iterations — to everyone else affected, there's no recollection of previous actions or outcomes, it's as if they're progressing through the Replayed period for the first time.

Personal Immunity: Characters can't buy this Advantage for Replay; they must use the *Replay Immunity* (+½) Advantage described below.

Replay Immunity (+½): As discussed in the main text, a character using Replay experiences its effects just like everyone else. That doesn't apply for Replay bought with this Advantage. In that case the character using the Power stays right where he is, isn't "healed" of any negative consequences (and doesn't lose any positive ones), and so forth. Typically this doesn't cause the character any harm or difficulties, but the final outcome's up to the GM — if the character chooses to stand in the middle of the street while Replaying time, there's a good chance a car returning to its "starting point" will run over him in the process (assuming the power's special effect involves "rewinding time" or the like).

Characters often buy the *Usable Simultaneously* Advantage for Replay with Replay Immunity so that they can extend the immunity to other persons (such as their colleagues, teammates, and DNPCs). Unless the GM rules otherwise, this doesn't grant other characters the ability to replay time, but makes them "immune" to Replay the way the character using the Power is.

LIMITATIONS

A character cannot buy Replay with Limitations like *Only To Heal Myself* so that he "rewinds time" to, in effect, render himself immune to all injury. In general, the GM shouldn't let characters buy any form of Replay that "partly" stops time; Replaying time is by and large an all-or-nothing sort of effect.

Limited Area (varies): Some characters may only want to be able to "rewind" time throughout a small area rather than all Reality. See the accompanying table for suggested Limitation values. However, those values assume that the campaign setting is of fairly typical scale — a continent, perhaps even an entire planet. In campaigns that routinely cover far greater areas, the GM should adjust the values accordingly to allow characters to affect meaningful amounts of the setting with Replay. Conversely, in campaigns which never leave a small area (such as a single city), the GM should adjust the values, since a Replay large enough to cover the entire campaign setting isn't really "Limited" in any way.

LIMITED AREA REPLAY

Value	Area Affected
-2	Up to 10m radius
-1¾	11-100m radius
-1½	101m-1 km radius
-1¼	1.1-10 km radius
-1	10.1-100 km radius
-¾	100.1-1,000 km radius
-½	1,000.1-10,000 km radius
-¼	10,000.1 km or greater radius

With the GM's permission, a character can define the -2 value of Limited Area as "Self Only" or only affecting a single target (though the GM should be sure that this doesn't violate the rule against buying a "partial" Replay only to protect the character). However, GMs should be wary of the game implications of allowing this. A "self only" Replay for 1 Segment or 1 Phase would give a character the opportunity to change his actions, or re-do a given roll until he gets the result he wants.

It's up to the GM to determine the campaign implications (and in some cases rules implications) of only Replaying time in a small area. The overall effect on the setting as a whole could be trivial, or it could unravel the fabric of space-time.

Transform

Transform can have the *Costs Endurance* (to maintain) Limitation. If the character stops paying END, the Transform effect stops working in total at the end of that Segment and the victim un-Transforms back into whatever shape/function he had before he was Transformed. Paying an END maintenance cost does not in any way increase the effectiveness of, or improve, a Transform power, nor allow it to keep working beyond the point at which the "heals back" condition is satisfied.

Tunneling

For game purposes, Tunneling does no BODY damage to substances or objects Tunneled through, unless and until the GM wants to invoke common or dramatic sense. It's a Movement Power, not an attack, and shouldn't be used as an attack. For example, a character can Tunnel through a building's wall and there's no risk of the building collapsing. However, if the character has to Tunnel through the wall in numerous places, eventually the GM might rule that the building falls down (or at least is at risk to). This is a far more likely occurrence when damaging the object is disadvantageous to the character; characters shouldn't be allowed to use Tunneling to destroy objects for their own benefit.

POWER ADVANTAGES



Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Power Advantages.

Naked Advantages

Characters generally cannot Aid naked Advantages, because there's usually no way to "improve" them (aside perhaps from increasing the Active Points they can apply to). The GM can allow this if he wants to, but if so he should determine how Aid applies.

Alternate Combat Value

If a character has a power bought with ACV such that it uses OMCV in place of OCV, and that power fits the "Simulating Mental Powers" guidelines on 6E1 326 so that the GM declares it's treated as a "Mental Power," then he should use the character's EGO, not his DEX, to determine when his Phase occurs in a Segment. Otherwise, use his DEX as usual.

Area Of Effect

The Damage Shield rules on 6E1 321 apply only to HTH Combat. However, there may be characters or power concepts for which a similar sort of effect might apply to Ranged Combat attacks. For example, a character with a body made of electricity might be able to send a Blast back at anyone who shoots him with a Ranged energy attack.

At the GM's option, characters can buy this by adding an additional +0 Advantage, *Ranged*, for Damage Shield. A Ranged Damage Shield works just like a regular Damage Shield, except that it's triggered by Ranged attacks instead of HTH attacks. If the GM feels, based on the frequency of Ranged attacks in the campaign, that this would be unbalancingly effective, he can increase the value of the Advantage.

Attack Versus Alternate Defense

If a power takes AVAD as a Limitation (such as a Drain that works against PD), the *Does BODY* (+1) Advantage is still required to make the attack do BODY damage.

If a character buys a Damage Over Time ability that has the AVAD Advantage, he must pay for the "defense only applies once" modifier to Damage Over Time's value.

At the GM's option, for an additional +¼ Advantage a character can define *two* defenses for his AVAD. He defines which one applies at the start of the game session, and can switch to the other defense as a Zero Phase Action at any time. If desired, the GM can even take this a step further and allow characters to define three, four, or more possible AVAD defenses that they can switch between, at a cost of an additional +¼ Advantage for each additional defense. Alternately, an AVAD might work against either of two defenses, whichever is *less* beneficial for the attacker; this would be a -¼ Limitation. (The GM could extend this as well, with an additional -¼ Limitation for each additional defense.)

6E1 326 notes that lack of something, being or not being a member of a particular species or profession, and a defined number of points of a given defense generally aren't valid defenses to NNDs. This reasoning holds true for other types of AVADs. However, the GM can make exceptions if he wishes. Some possible examples include:

- the defense is having a given Characteristic (obviously a Very Common defense if the power's intended for use against living beings) — for example, a target's CON or BODY might be the defense against a disease- or poison-based attack, allowing "healthier" or "tougher" targets to take less damage
- the defense is having a power or powers of a given special effect — for example, in a Fantasy campaign, some Shadow Magic spells might not work against anyone who could cast Light Magic or Divine Magic spells
- a bio-weapon that's genetically tailored to affect members of a given species only; against other species it has no effect at all



Autofire

When a character uses naked Autofire Advantage, he pays END for the naked Advantage once per shot fired. For example, suppose a character fires three shots of a 30 Active Point power with a naked *Autofire* (5 shots; +½) Advantage, the character pays $((3 \times 3) + (3 \times 1)) = 12$ END.

As a default rule, Autofire attacks that are Area Of Effect (Selective or Non-Selective) still require the standard +1 additional Advantage for Autofire even though ordinary Attack Rolls are required to hit each individual target. However, the GM is free to review the power in light of his campaign and waive the additional +1 if he feels the need for further Attack Rolls to hit the individual targets in the Area provides enough game balance as is.

If a character applies a naked Autofire Advantage to an attack that has the *Reduced Endurance* Advantage, the following occurs: Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) affects the base power as normal but has no effect on the Autofire's END cost; Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) affects the base power as normal but only reduces the END cost of the Autofire to ½ END per shot. Thus, a character who expects to use a naked Autofire Advantage frequently with an attack and doesn't want to spend a lot of END should consider paying the higher Reduced Endurance cost for Autofire attacks for the base power, even if that won't have any additional effect when he's not using Autofire.

Choosing to use less than the full number of Autofire shots a character has available to him does not in any way affect the calculation of how DCs are added to the attack.

HIT LOCATIONS

How Autofire interacts with the Hit Location rules depends on how those rules are being used.

If the attacker has declared a Placed Shot and suffered the OCV penalty for that Hit Location, then all the Autofire shots hit that Location. He was willing to suffer the penalty so he deserves the benefits if he still hits despite that penalty.

If the Hit Location struck by an attack is simply being rolled, then the attacker should roll once for each shot that hits the target.

Cumulative

If multiple attackers have the same Cumulative power, the amounts they roll are not combined. Each Cumulative attack is a separate thing and accumulates its points separately. However, in some campaigns for some unusual powers the GM might choose to allow Cumulative rolls from multiple uses of the same power to add together if the attackers successfully Coordinate their attacks.

Damage Over Time

As stated on 6E1 328, Damage Over Time can be bought for powers that “do damage,” such as Blast, Drain, Killing Attack, or Mental Blast. However, the GM can allow characters to buy DoT for other types of attacks. Here are some guidelines for how DoT applies to various Powers:

Aid: Although Aid isn't really an “attack” *per se*, DoT could apply to it in much the same way it applies to Drain. However, since the gained points won't start to fade until all increments of effect accrue, GMs should be very wary of such powers' potential to unbalance the campaign. Consider this a “Caution Sign” combination.

Barrier: A Barrier intended solely (or perhaps even primarily) for englobing targets could have DoT to represent the fact that it starts out weak and grows stronger over time. The character buys the length, height, and width that he wants, plus however much PD, ED, and BODY he wants to start with (usually a small amount, like 1 PD, 1 ED, 1 BODY). For each DoT increment that passes, the Barrier gains the purchased amount of PD, ED, and BODY. Alternately the GM can allow the character to buy some of those aspects of Barrier to a predefined full amount and only have DoT apply to the others.

Change Environment: Each increment of effect adds the purchased amount of combat effect to a Change Environment. For example, Change Environment, -1 to Sight Group PER Rolls, DoT, would add an additional -1 Sight Group PER Roll per increment. That might represent a Create Fog Spell or a Spell of Darkening Shadows.

Darkness: Each increment of effect adds the purchased amount of meters radius of Darkness to the Darkness field, slowly but surely making it bigger. (See *Area Of Effect*, below.)

Dispel: Each increment of effect adds the purchased amount of Dispel dice to the effect. This removes the “one roll all or nothing” effect of Dispel — the character keeps rolling the added dice and adding up the total until all increments accrue. If at any time the total equals or exceeds the Active Point total of the target ability, it stops working.

Entangle: A DoT Entangle gets tougher and/or harder to break free from as time passes. The character buys the dice of BODY, the PD, and the ED, he wants to start with (usually a small amount, like 1d6, 1 PD/1 ED, 1 BODY). For each DoT increment that passes, the Barrier gains the purchased amount of BODY, PD, and ED. Alternately the GM can allow the character to buy some of those aspects of Entangle to a predefined full amount and only have DoT apply to the others.

Flash: Typically DoT has no effect when applied to a Flash. Once the initial attack hits and the target Sense is “blinded,” further increments have no effect because the target is already “blind” and

thus can't perceive them. However, the ongoing accrual of dice could "blind" the character again if he recovers from the initial Flash effect before all increments have accrued. Or a generous GM might allow the Flash dice increments to extend the duration of the Flash regardless of "realism."

Healing: DoT can apply to Healing just like to Aid, though the same game balance considerations generally don't exist, since Healing can't increase a Characteristic beyond a certain point and never fades anyway. However, the GM would have to waive the rule about repeated Healing for a DoT Healing to work properly.

Images: Each increment of effect adds the purchased amount of PER Roll penalty to the effect. Alternately, the GM might allow each increment to add another Sense or Sense Group to the Image, making it progressively "better."

Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, Telepathy: DoT applied to these powers works much the same as Cumulative: the dice keep adding until all increments have accrued, and if the overall Effect Roll is enough to reach the declared effect, the target's affected; otherwise he isn't.

Telekinesis: Characters can't apply DoT to Telekinesis, unless the GM's willing to permit it and to determine how increments can accrue for a Constant Power.

Transform: Each increment of effect adds the purchased amount of dice to the effect. Somewhat like Cumulative, the dice keep adding until all increments have accrued, and if the overall Effect Roll is enough to Transform the target, he's Transformed; otherwise he remains unchanged.

Area Of Effect: At the GM's option, characters can buy DoT for any power with Area Of Effect. Each increment of effect adds the purchased amount of Area (typical 1m Radius) to the Area, gradually increasing its size. Since this to some extent makes the power function like a Constant Area-affecting power, the GM may require that it also have Constant (+½) if it's not already Constant.

Usable As Attack: With the GM's permission characters can apply DoT to Usable As Attack powers, but he has to determine how the increments accrue and other effects.

Delayed Effect

If a power has Delayed Effect, contrary to the usual rules for Advantaged powers a character can use the power "normally," without having to "store" it. In that case the Limitations on the power apply normally.

If a slot in a Power Framework has the *Delayed Effect* Advantage, once a character prepares and "stores" that power according to the Delayed Effect rules he has to keep the Framework allocated to that power. If he switches the Framework to another slot in such a way that the Framework is no longer fully allocated to the stored power, the stored power is lost. (If he's stored that slot multiple times, he loses all of them.) If the character wants to store the Delayed Effect power again, he has to re-allocate the Framework to it and go through all the preparations again. If the character has multiple Framework slots stored, when he re-allocates the Framework and loses one he can decide which one is lost at that time (he doesn't have to define this in advance).

Example: *Khalandrian the Mystic is a wizard in a Fantasy Hero campaign where characters are allowed to buy spells in Multipowers. He has a Multipower with a 62-point reserve and four slots: Blast 10d6, Delayed Effect; RKA 3d6, Delayed Effect; Drain STUN 5d6, Delayed Effect; Teleportation 40m, Delayed Effect. Each slot is a Fixed slot and has Concentration, Extra Time, Gestures, Incantations, and Requires A Magic Roll as Limitations. The campaign rules restrict Khalandrian to INT/3 spells he can "store" at any one time, which in his case means eight spells.*

Khalandrian uses Delayed Effect to "store" his RKA spell. However, he can't switch the Multipower to another slot without losing his stored RKA, so he can't "store" any other slots' spells. Khalandrian makes the best of a bad situation and "stores" the RKA spell seven more times, bringing him to his maximum of eight stored spells.

Vorzhan the Arcane is another wizard in the same campaign. He has the same Multipower and spells as Khalandrian, except that his reserve is 124 points. So he stores the RKA spell and the Teleportation spell, since the reserve is large enough for him to have any two slots active at a time. He stores the RKA five times and the Teleportation spell three times. If he switches the reserve to the Blast or the Drain, he'll lose either all the stored RKA spells or all the stored Teleportation spells.

Later Vorzhan earns enough Experience Points to convert all four of his spell slots into Variable slots and to increase the reserve to 148 points. He decides to store lesser versions of all four of his spells: Blast 6d6; RKA 2d6; Drain 3d6; and Teleportation 30m. That's four 37-point slots, which fit exactly into his Multipower reserve. He stores the Blast spell two times, the RKA spell three times, the Drain spell one time, and the Teleportation spell two times. However, since he's used up all of his reserve with these four spells, if

he decides to re-allocate the reserve so he can cast a more powerful version of one of the spells (say, RKA 3d6), he'll lose one of the other stored spells (such as both stored Teleportation spells) to "free up" enough of the reserve.

Does Knockback

If a character has a Power like Flash, Drain, or Dispel with the Advantage *Does Knockback*, and the target lacks the Sense or ability the Power affects, the target does not take Knockback. As noted on APG 54, an Adjustment Power with a secondary effect (such as Does Knockback) doesn't have that secondary effect if the target doesn't have the Characteristic, Power, or ability the Adjustment Power affects. For example, a Drain Blast, Does Knockback, if used against a target with no Blast attack, has no effect at all — it doesn't cause Knockback.

Generally speaking, this reasoning extends to other powers, including Dispel (which is similar to Adjustment Powers in many ways), Flash, and the like. If the target *cannot* be affected by the power because he lacks what it targets (e.g., a blind person hit with a Sight Group Flash; a person without Flight hit with Dispel Flight), then the secondary effect (such as Does Knockback) also cannot apply. Note, however, that having a lot of defense against an attack (e.g., enough Sight Group Flash Defense to totally block a Flash) or being temporarily immune to a power (e.g., a character being protected from Sight Group Flashes because he was just affected by one and is now temporarily blind) *does not* qualify as "cannot be affected" — as used above, that term generally means it's impossible for the character ever to be affected, not just temporarily impossible.

As always, the GM should apply these rules with an eye toward common sense, dramatic sense, special effects, and game balance.

Double Knockback

If a character has the *Double Knockback* (+½) Advantage for his STR or Telekinesis, that Advantage has no effect on how far he can Shove another character.



IRRESISTIBLE KNOCKBACK

At the GM's option, characters can buy Double Knockback as *Irresistible Knockback* instead. This form of the Advantage doesn't increase the amount of KB done to a target, but if the character's KB roll results in 0m of Knockback, the target is automatically Knocked Back a minimum of 2m. (However, this does *not* apply if the reduction to 0m KB is a result of the target having Knockback Resistance; as a defense, Knockback Resistance "trumps" Irresistible Knockback.)

Impenetrable

If a character who has some Impenetrable defenses and some defenses that are not Impenetrable is hit with a Penetrating attack, compare the average BODY for the Penetrating attack to the Impenetrable defenses. (In the case of Drains and the like, count the "Normal Damage BODY" for these purposes, unless it's a Drain BODY, in which case determine the average in the standard mathematical way.) If the average BODY exceeds the Impenetrable defenses, the Impenetrable is "overcome" and the Penetrating attack has its standard (Advantaged) effect. If the average BODY is less than or equal to the Impenetrable defenses, the Impenetrable "negates" the Penetrating and the attack applies to the target's defenses in its standard (non-Advantaged) way.

Example: Protector has 20 PD (non-Advantaged). He also has Resistant Protection (10 PD/10 ED), Impenetrable. He's hit with an RKA 2½d6, Penetrating bullet. The average BODY for that RKA would be 8.75 (2.5d6 x 3.5). That's less than 10 PD, so Impenetrable applies and the Penetrating effect is negated.

Later, Protector's slashed with a magic sword (HKA 4d6, Penetrating). The average BODY on this attack is 14. That's more than 10 PD, so the Impenetrable doesn't apply; the attack has its usual Penetrating effect.

MegaScale

As noted on 6E1 340, MegaScaled powers require a Full Phase and ½ DCV to use. Unless the GM rules otherwise, if a character has a Constant or Persistent power that's MegaScaled in some way, it requires a Full Phase Action to maintain every Phase that it's in use, and the character remains at ½ DCV as long as the power's in use.

Penetrating

The minimum damage incurred because an attack is Penetrating qualifies as "exceeding" an Ablative defense for lowering the Required Roll.

Persistent

If a Power is Persistent by default, such as Mental Defense, applying the *Costs Endurance Only To Activate* (+¼) Limitation converts it into a Constant Power, per 6E1 128, 374.

On the other hand, some Powers are Constant and are made Persistent by application of the *Persistent* Advantage (6E1 334). Typically these Powers are bought with Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), but that's not mandatory. However, a Persistent Power cannot simply cost END to activate (either via an Advantage or a Limitation) — it must either cost no END, or cost END to maintain (either naturally, or via application of a Limitation).

Personal Immunity

Generally, a character cannot buy Personal Immunity to another character's power as a naked Advantage — it's *Personal Immunity*, after all, not just Immunity. But the GM could allow this if he wanted to. If so, it's most appropriate when the characters have some connection, such as being siblings or having the same types of powers.

Time Limit

If a character has Time Limit on a Body-Affecting Power, when the defined time period ends the power stops working. Typically this means that all Duplicates instantly recombine with the character, or that he reverts to his true shape, size, or form, but there are two caveats to keep in mind. The first is special effects; for example, for some types of Duplication it might make more sense for the Duplicates to simply “drop dead.” Second, this effect cannot be used to benefit the character in any significant way, such as providing him with the *Ranged Recombination* (+½) Advantage for free; it's up to the GM to adjudicate the situation as seems best for his campaign.

See page 50 for rules about Time Limit's interaction with Linked.

Trigger

Once a Trigger is set, using a Triggered power is governed by the rules on 6E1 350, which state that activating a Trigger is usually a Zero Phase Action. The time required to reset a Trigger does not affect the time required to activate a Trigger; those are two separate things.

If a character has a Triggered ability (regardless of how long it takes to set the Trigger), he cannot use it as a “normal” ability without setting the Trigger. As noted on 6E1 316, Advantages are generally mandatory, so a Triggered power should only be activated/used via its Trigger, not “normally.” A character who wants to be able to use his Triggered power that way should buy the power as a Multipower, one slot with Trigger and one without.

Usable As [Second Mode Of Movement]

If a character has a Movement Power with the *Usable As [Second Form Of Movement]* (+¼) Advantage, and while moving he's hit with an attack that does Knockback, determine Knockback normally for whatever mode of movement he's using at the time. Thus, if he's Running, roll 2d6; if he's Flying, roll 1d6. The special effects of the movement (such as “I run through the air” or “I can fly only in contact with a surface to simulate super-running”) are irrelevant; what matters is the Movement Power being used at that time and the Knockback rules pertaining to it.

Usable On Others

If a Power is Obvious when in use (like Body-Affecting Powers are), the granting of such powers to another person via Usable On Others is also Obvious.

A power granted through any form of Usable On Others has to be granted in full as defined. A character cannot grant part of a power to a recipient — for example, if he has Flight 20m, Usable By Other, he can't choose to grant just Flight 10m. But of course, a character could decide not to use all of a Usable As Attack power on the target if that's possible (for example, Teleportation 40m UAA used to Teleport someone only 15m).

6E1 354 states, “If [the granted power] doesn't cost END, granting it costs [the grantor] no END.” This also applies to UOO powers built using the “differing modifiers” rules, unless the GM rules otherwise.

If the recipient of a UOO power is in a position to activate a power (*i.e.*, he has a Zero Phase Action coming, or he's able to Abort to activate a defensive granted ability), then he can activate/use the granted power in the same Segment in which it's granted, if he so chooses. Furthermore, as long as there's no game balance reason to the contrary (such as “we're in mid-combat”), common sense and dramatic sense dictate there are plenty of situations when the GM can simply assume the granted power immediately takes effect.

DIFFERING MODIFIERS AND CHARGES

According to 6E1 360, taking Charges on a Usable By Other/Usable Simultaneously power indicates the number of times per day that power can be granted to another person. The recipient isn't restricted by the Charges — he can use the power as often as he can afford to pay END for it. If the grantor wants the recipient to only be able to use the granted power a restricted number of times, he has to build the granted power using the “differing modifiers” rules and apply Charges to it.

If there's no *Charges Limitation* on the Usable On Others power itself, the grantor can grant the power as often as the form of Usable On Others he's paid for will allow him to (subject to any other restrictions or requirements, of course, such as paying END). The fact that the granted power has, say, 8 Charges doesn't mean it can only be granted eight times per day, or used eight times per day overall — it means that each recipient granted the power can use it eight times per day. Since this could in some respects “invalidate” the Charges on the granted power, the GM should consider very carefully before letting characters creating granted powers that have Charges.

If the GM permits a granted power to have Charges, the grantor can build the power to further restrict its use. For example, the Charges on the granted power could have Increased

Recovery Time, Restricted Recovery, or Never Recovers, or the granted power could have some other Limitation that affects how often (or under what conditions) the recipient can use it. Again, because this could effectively counteract the restrictiveness of Charges, the GM should review any such powers carefully before allowing them into play.

Example: *Arkelos wants to be able to grant the following spell to his comrades:*

Sword Of Lightning: RKA 3d6, Lasts Through Unconsciousness (+½) (67 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 22 points.

Pursuant to the differing modifiers rules, that 22 point cost becomes the Base Cost for his UOO spell: Usable By Other (+¼) for Sword Of Lightning spell (27 Active Points); OAF (Wizard's Staff; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) (total cost: 9 points).

Since Arkelos only bought Usable By Other, he can only cast Grant Sword Of Lightning on one person at a time. Because Sword Of Lightning has the Lasts Through Unconsciousness (+½) Advantage (6E1 355), the recipient keeps control of it even if he's Stunned, Knocked Out/asleep, or the like. Until the recipient relinquishes control, or loses it through some other means, Arkelos can't grant Sword Of Lightning to anyone else. The recipient could in theory keep Sword Of Lightning for days, weeks, or longer, though since it has 4 Charges he can only cast the spell four times per day.

Once Arkelos regains "control" and can cast Grant Sword Of Lightning again, he can freely cast it — the fact that Sword Of Lightning itself only has 4 Charges doesn't limit Arkelos to only casting it four times per day, or in any other way restrict his ability to cast Grant Sword Of Lightning. In theory he could keep casting it on the same person again and again after the recipient uses up the Charges each time, effectively giving the recipient an unrestricted number of Sword Of Lightning spells to cast. The GM threatens to withhold some of Arkelos's royalty payments if he ever tries to pull this sort of stunt.

Suppose Arkelos had instead bought Grant Sword Of Lightning this way:

Usable Simultaneously (8 people; +1) for Sword Of Lightning spell (44 Active Points); OAF (Wizard's Staff; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) (total cost: 15 points).

In that case he could grant Sword Of Lightning to eight people at a time, significantly increasing his group's firepower. He couldn't cast it on one person multiple times at once, however.

Suppose further that Arkelos only wanted the recipient to be able to cast Sword Of Lightning four times regardless of how long he kept the spell. In that case he'd build the spells this way:

Sword Of Lightning (4 Charges only version):

RKA 3d6, Lasts Through Unconsciousness (+½) (67 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), 4 Charges which Never Recover (-3). Total cost: 13 points.

Grant Sword Of Lightning (4 Charges only version):

Usable By Other (+¼) for Sword Of Lightning spell (16 Active Points); OAF (Wizard's Staff; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½) (total cost: 5 points).

With that version of the spell, the recipient can only cast Sword Of Lightning four times, regardless of how long he keeps control of it. Once he casts it four times, control of it automatically reverts to Arkelos, who can then freely cast Grant Sword Of Lightning again.

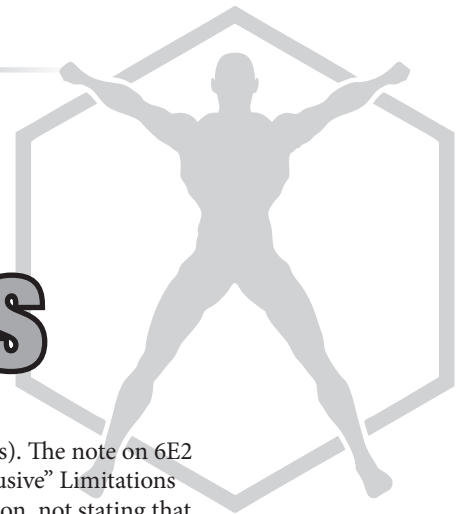
The GM decides that this in effect renders "Never Recovers" meaningless and reduces its value from -2 to -0 (thus changing the Real Cost of Sword Of Lightning to 22 points, and the Active Point/Real Point cost of Grant Sword Of Lightning to 27/9 points). Arkelos suggests that he could take a -0 Limitation, Can Only Be Cast On A Person Once Per Year. The GM decides this is a valid balancing factor and changes Never Recovers to a -1 value (thus changing the Real Cost of Sword Of Lightning to 17 points, and the Active Point/Real Point cost of Grant Sword Of Lightning to 21/7 points).

Variable Advantage

6E1 361, left-hand column, bottom paragraph expresses the general rule that with the GM's permission, a character can use a Variable Advantage to expand or complement an existing Advantage, using the example of increasing Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) to Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) by "adding to it" +¼ worth of Variable Advantage. That logic holds true for most other Advantages, such as improving Indirect or Invisible Power Effects, making an Area Of Effect or MegaScale cover a greater/larger area, and so on. However, Variable Advantage can't be used to "change" an existing Advantage (such as changing the defense to an AVAD) unless (a) the Variable Advantage is large enough to completely replace the existing Advantage, and (b) the GM permits it (which is unlikely in the case of trying to devise a way to quickly and easily change an AVAD's defined defense, for example).

If a character uses Variable Advantage to choose an Advantage that has to be defined some way when purchased (such as defining the Source Point for a power that has Indirect, or the defense for a power with AVAD), the character does not have to define that Advantage "in advance," nor is he restricted to using that Advantage in just one way every time he chooses that Advantage. He can change the way the Advantage affects the power, or how its defined aspects are defined, each time he chooses that Advantage with Variable Advantage... unless, of course, the GM rules otherwise.

POWER LIMITATIONS



Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Power Limitations.

Ablative

The minimum damage incurred because an attack is Penetrating qualifies as “exceeding” an Ablative defense for lowering the Required Roll.

Charges

It's not uncommon for characters to take the *Charges* Power Modifier on a Multipower's reserve to indicate that all the slots in the Multipower draw from the same “pool” of Charges. At the GM's option a character can do this for a group of powers that aren't in a Power Framework. This is most common if the powers are in some way “related” (for example, they're all part of a Unified Power), but it's up to the GM to decide whether to allow it. The GM also determines whether the character can take an increased value for Charges (such as an additional $-\frac{1}{4}$ or $-\frac{1}{2}$ worth of Limitation) — sometimes having a group of powers draw from the same pool of Charges restricts a character more than normal, but in other cases the GM may not think it's sufficiently restrictive to merit increasing the Limitation (after all, a Multipower doesn't get one). However, even if the GM allows no additional Limitation, if a power draws from a common pool of Charges it qualifies for the *Requires Multiple Charges* Limitation (6E1 371) if the character has to use more than one Charge to activate the power.

Gestures, Incantations

As noted on 6E1 381-82, a character can activate two or more powers with Gestures (or Incantations) in the same Phase if they only require Gestures (or Incantations) to activate, so he could Multiple Attack with them in that case. If a power requires Gestures (or Incantations) throughout or to maintain, that prevents the character from using other powers with Gestures (or Incantations) in the same Phase, so that power couldn't be used in a Multiple Attack with other powers that

have Gestures (or Incantations). The note on 6E2 73 concerning “mutually exclusive” Limitations is referring to the latter situation, not stating that it's never possible to Multiple Attack with two or more powers that have Gestures (or Incantations).

Linked

Time Limit interacts with Linked in some unusual ways. Characters may take Time Limit on either the greater or lesser power in a Linked power, subject to the following rules:

1. Standard rules pertaining to the duration of the powers in a Linked power, discussed at various points on 6E1 383-85, still apply. Time Limit cannot be used to avoid or bypass those rules (unless, of course, the GM chooses to permit this).
2. Ideally both the greater and lesser powers should have Time Limit, and it should be for the same period of time, but this is not required. A character could, for example, have a greater power with a long Time Limit and a lesser power with a short one, or a greater power that functions normally and a lesser power with Time Limit.

If the greater power is subject to a Time Limit and the lesser power is not, the lesser power automatically stops functioning (or becomes unable to be used) when the specified time period ends. If the greater power is not subject to Time Limit and the lesser power is, the lesser power automatically stops functioning (or becomes unable to be used) when the character stops using the greater power.

Psionic ($-\frac{1}{2}$)

This Limitation represents a power that simulates a psionic ability — which means it should only work when other minds are present, not when inanimate objects are involved. It doesn't apply to Mental Powers (which already suffer from this restriction); it's intended for abilities that normally would apply to “mental” and “non-mental” situations. Examples include Combat Skill Levels, Danger Sense, and certain attacks that “mimic” Mental Powers through the application of ACV, AVAD, and other Advantages. For example,



Danger Sense with Psionic wouldn't alert a character to the danger posed by a trap or rockslide, since neither of them involve a mind in any way — it only warns him about threats posed by beings with minds.

In most cases, Psionic is worth $-\frac{1}{2}$. The GM may allow characters to take it at the $-\frac{1}{4}$ level if the power could work based on mental traces or energies left in a physical object. For example, Danger Sense with $-\frac{1}{4}$ Psionic could perceive a trap (assuming the “mental energies” of whoever placed it linger in it), but not a rockslide or other natural disaster (which have no “mental” component at all).

Unified Power

If a character uses a Drain that has Expanded Effects to affect more than one Characteristic/power of a given special effect at once, and the target's Characteristics/powers of that special effect are united by the *Unified Power* Limitation, the effects of the Drain are not “multiplied” or “cumulative.” Each targeted ability, and each ability united with any of them via Unified Power, is affected by the Drain in the amount rolled on the dice.

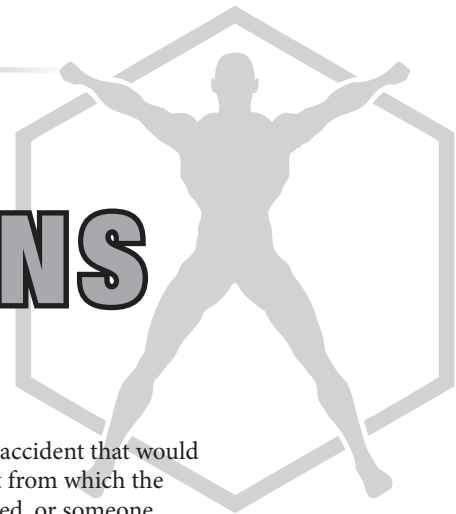
Example: *Captain Halon has Drain Fire Powers 4d6, Expanded Effect (four Fire Powers at a time). He attacks the insidious Fire Weasel, targeting his Blast, RKA, Resistant Protection, and Flight powers, which all have “Fire” as their special effect, and each of which has the Unified*

Power Limitation. Captain Halon hits and rolls his Drain dice, getting a 16. Each of those four powers loses 16 points' worth of effect. In addition, Fire Weasel has several other Fire powers (including a Damage Shield, some Flash Defense, and various other attacks) that are united with all of those four powers in the Unified Power. Each of those united abilities also lose 16 points' worth of effect. They do not each lose $16 \times X$ points, where X is the number of powers united by Unified Power.

Variable Limitations

A character can't use Variable Limitation to counteract, negate, nullify, or contradict an Advantage that a power has (like applying Increased Endurance Cost to a power that has Reduced Endurance (0 END)). Nor can a character use Variable Advantage to counteract, negate, nullify, or contradict a Limitation that a power has.

COMPLICATIONS



Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Complications.

General Rules

If a player has a character who sells back something to represent a physical infirmity or handicap of some sort — such as selling back his vision because he's blind, or his CON because he's sickly — the points he gets from selling that thing back do not count toward his Complications. Selling back innate abilities is a separate process from taking Complications to get Matching Complications points.

Accidental Change

As its name indicates, the “classic” use of Accidental Change is to represent a character who can't control his shapechanging abilities — such as a werewolf who involuntarily changes to lupine form during the full moon. However, you can use it more broadly than that. Instead of thinking of it as just *Accidental Change*, think of it as “accidentally revealing something I don't want to have revealed” or “accidentally losing control over some or all of my powers.” For example:

- a character with a Social Limitation: Secret Identity could take Accidental Change to represent the possibility that he accidentally gives away his secret. The classic example here is a super-strong character could take Accidental Change to represent the chance that he mistakenly or unthinkingly reveals his superhuman

strength. Maybe there's an accident that would injure a normal person but from which the character emerges unscathed, or someone catches a glimpse of the character making casual use of his tremendous STR to perform chores. For this type of Accidental Change, the GM should roll the “chance to change” at the beginning of each game session (or scenario); if the roll succeeds, something happens during the game session (scenario) that reveals the character's true nature (and thus possibly gives away his secret).

- a character with energy powers might not have full control over them. For example, he might sometimes burst into flame, or might fire a laser beam from his eyes when he gets stressed.
- an apprentice wizard might not yet understand magic as well as he thinks. When he tries to cast a spell (either any spell, or just certain types of spells, depending on how he's defined the Complication), there's a chance that a result other than what he intended will occur. He won't fail to cast the spell (that's not what Accidental Change is for), but he might mistakenly light an object on fire when he tries to cast a Cleaning-Spell, or might poison someone when he attempts to cast a Spell Of Healing on him.

Enraged/Berserk

The accompanying table lists suggested frequency values for various circumstances that tend to trigger Enrageds. The frequency values are based on the “typical” campaign, and so may not be appropriate for all campaigns. For example, while combat is a Common occurrence in most campaigns, in a campaign focused on the PCs fighting in a war it may be Very Common, while in a game centered around the political and social machinations of a king's court physical combat might be Uncommon at best.



ENRAGED FREQUENCY TABLE

Circumstance	Frequency
Accused of improper conduct	Uncommon to Common
Annoyed	
In any way	Common to Very Common
In specific way(s)	Uncommon to Common
Attacked	
In any way	Very Common
With specified weapon/phenomenon (such as fire)	Depends on frequency with which that attack is used in the campaign
Betrayal, treachery	Uncommon
BODY damage, when takes	
Any amount	Common
Specified amount (usually at least 5 BODY)	Uncommon
Blood, perceiving	
Any blood	Common
Character's own blood	Uncommon
Challenged	Uncommon to Common
Cheating	Uncommon
Combat, when in	
Any type of combat	Very Common
Combat against specific category/type of foe	Depends on frequency with which that foe appears in the campaign, but usually at least Common
Combat against specific foe	Depends on frequency with which that foe appears in the campaign, but usually at least Common
Confronted with something he dislikes, when	Depends on how frequently the "something" appears in the campaign
Denied something he wants	Uncommon
Deprived of specified object	Uncommon
Disobeyed, questioned, defied	Uncommon to Common
DNPC is harmed or threatened, when	Same as frequency of DNPC's appearance in the campaign

Circumstance	Frequency
Frustrated	Common
Humiliated, embarrassed	Uncommon to Common
Hunted, when encounters/fights	Depends on frequency with which that Hunted appears in the campaign
Hurt, injured	
In any way	Common
Specified way (usually at least 5+ BODY or 30+ STUN)	Uncommon
Insulted, mocked, belittled, disrespected, taunted	
In general	Common to Very Common
About specific subject or in specific way	Uncommon to Common
Loved one/object is harmed or threatened, when	
Individual	Uncommon (but see "DNPC," above)
Category or type of person	Common
Mention of hated individual's name	Uncommon to Common
Not being taken seriously	Common
Outdone or beaten, when	Depends on how skilled character is at the type of contest or challenge
Prevented from doing something he wants to do	Uncommon to Common
Questioned as to sanity or other valued trait	Uncommon to Common
Stressful situations, when in	Common to Very Common
Subjected to specific non-attack phenomenon	Uncommon to Common
Target resists specific type of attack	Uncommon
Thwarted, stopped	Common
Tricked, fooled	Uncommon to Common
Wants something but is denied it	Uncommon
Unfair tactics	Uncommon

Similarly, the frequency of an Enraged may depend in part on the character taking it. For most characters, taking BODY damage tends to be a Common occurrence. But if a character has so much defense that harming him is extremely difficult, taking BODY becomes an Uncommon occurrence. If a character's immensely powerful and dangerous, few characters will dare to insult or mock him (making that an Uncommon trigger for Enraged), whereas others seem to invite insults or mockery at every turn or come from a culture where ritual taunting factors into most battles (so it becomes a Very Common trigger).

Psychological Complication

Here are some new and expanded rules for Psychological Complication.

EXPANDED INTENSITY

Psychological Complication is perhaps the most popular Complication, and certainly the one that tends to best (or most easily) define a character in the player's mind. However, with only three intensity categories — Moderate (+5 to EGO Rolls to resist), Strong (+0 to EGO Rolls), and Total (-5 to EGO Rolls) — there may not be quite enough variation and flexibility for some players or campaigns. The accompanying Expanded Intensity Table provides a wider range of possibilities.

Alternately, you can create even more finely-grained Psychological Complications by basing the value of the "Intensity" part of the Complication solely on the penalty or bonus to the character's EGO Rolls to avoid its effects. For each -1 to the EGO Roll the character experiences, the value of the Complication increases by +2 points. For every +1 bonus to the EGO Roll the character receives, decrease the value of the Complication by -1 point. This makes Psychological Complication worth fewer points than the regular version.

Example: *Derek Lockhart, Adventurer for Hire!*, has three Psychological Complications. The first is *Thrillseeker* — he has a hard time resisting excitement, challenges, and danger. This is a Common situation (10 points) and he suffers a -2 to his EGO Rolls to resist (+4 points) — total value 14 points.

Second, he's in love with his girlfriend, *Jesse Adair, Part-Time Adventutrix for Hire!*... but not head over heels in love or anything. This is also a Common situation, but he receives neither a bonus or penalty when making EGO Rolls to resist the Psychological Complication's influence on his behavior. So this one's worth 10 points.

Third, he Loves Money — but not so much that it makes him a total mercenary or prevents him from doing the Right Thing when he has to. This is a Common situation (10 points), but he gets a +3 bonus to EGO Rolls (-3 points) to resist the siren song of filthy lucre. That gives the Complication a final value of 7 points.

EXPANDED INTENSITY TABLE

Value	Intensity
+0	Mild: Has some influence on character's actions and decisions, but a weak enough one that the character can easily decide to do something else — he can resist the Complication's effects if he succeeds with an EGO Roll at +5.
+3	Moderate: At this level, a Psychological Complication often decides the character's choice of targets, his reaction to situations, and so forth. He may only take an action that doesn't comply with his Psychological Complication if he succeeds with an EGO Roll at +3.
+5	Strong: A character often takes irrational actions concerning any situation related to a Strong Psychological Complication. It has strong effects on his conduct, and he can only avoid them if he succeeds with an EGO Roll.
+8	Very Strong: A Very Strong Psychological Complication is like a Strong one, but the character is affected to an even greater degree. He can only act against the pull of the Complication if he succeeds with an EGO Roll at -3.
+10	Total: A character with a Total Psychological Complication becomes totally useless or completely irrational in any situation it relates to. He can only change his mind or take actions that don't comply with the Psychological Complication if he succeeds with an EGO Roll at -5 (or greater) to change actions (if the GM allows such a roll at all)

THE BENEFITS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLICATIONS

Psychological Complication is a *Complication* because it influences a character's actions to make him do things that aren't necessarily in his best interest. If he's In Love With Renee Murdock, when Renee is in danger he'll put his life at risk to save her even though the smart thing might be to run away; if she needs money he's likely to loan it to her despite the fact he'll have trouble making rent that month as a result. If he's Greedy, he might break the law and risk imprisonment to steal valuable things. If he Hates Orcs, he'll attack orcs in a battle even if the trolls fighting with them are far more dangerous and need to be slain first.

However, Psychological Complications also have some beneficial effects. They may make it easier for a character to resist the effect of Mind Control and some other Mental Powers, or make it more difficult for an enemy to successfully Presence Attack him.

The GM may, at his option, extend this concept of the beneficial effects of Psychological Complications further, so that whenever a character is fighting or struggling to fulfill one of his Psychological Complications in some meaningful way, he may receive bonuses to his CV and/or Skill Rolls. Specifically:

- a character with a *Moderate* Psychological Complication can receive a bonus of +1 at most
- a character with a *Strong* Psychological Complication can receive a bonus of up to +3
- a character with a *Total* Psychological Complication can receive a bonus of up to +5

The GM decides when a character receives a "Psychological Bonus," what that Bonus applies to, how large a Bonus it is, and how long the Bonus lasts. (In some senses this is akin to the GM deciding when to let a character make a Luck roll, but to an even greater degree since a Psychological Complication isn't an ability a character pays for.) Here are a few guidelines to help the GM make those decisions:

1. Specificity of the Psychological Complication:

The more precisely-focused a Psychological Complication is, the more likely it is to provide a character with a Psychological Bonus. The classic example here is *In Love With [Name]* — you can't get any more specific than being devotedly in love with a single individual. On the other hand, broadly-applicable Psychological Complications like *Heroic*, *Protective Of Innocents*, or *Patriotic* rarely, if ever, provide a character with a Psychological Bonus. For one thing, they're too diffuse; for another, they'd provide bonuses so often it would unbalance the game. Characters are *not* allowed to take Psychological Complications like "Heroic" and claim that *everything* they're doing is heroic and for the greater good so they always get a bonus.

2. Immediacy of the threat: The greater the danger to the subject of the Psychological Complication, the more likely it is that the character will get a Psychological Bonus. The archetypical example here is when a person or object the character's devoted to is threatened with death or destruction — this galvanizes the character's mind, making him concentrate so fully on preventing that from happening that he performs above and beyond his usual level of skill.

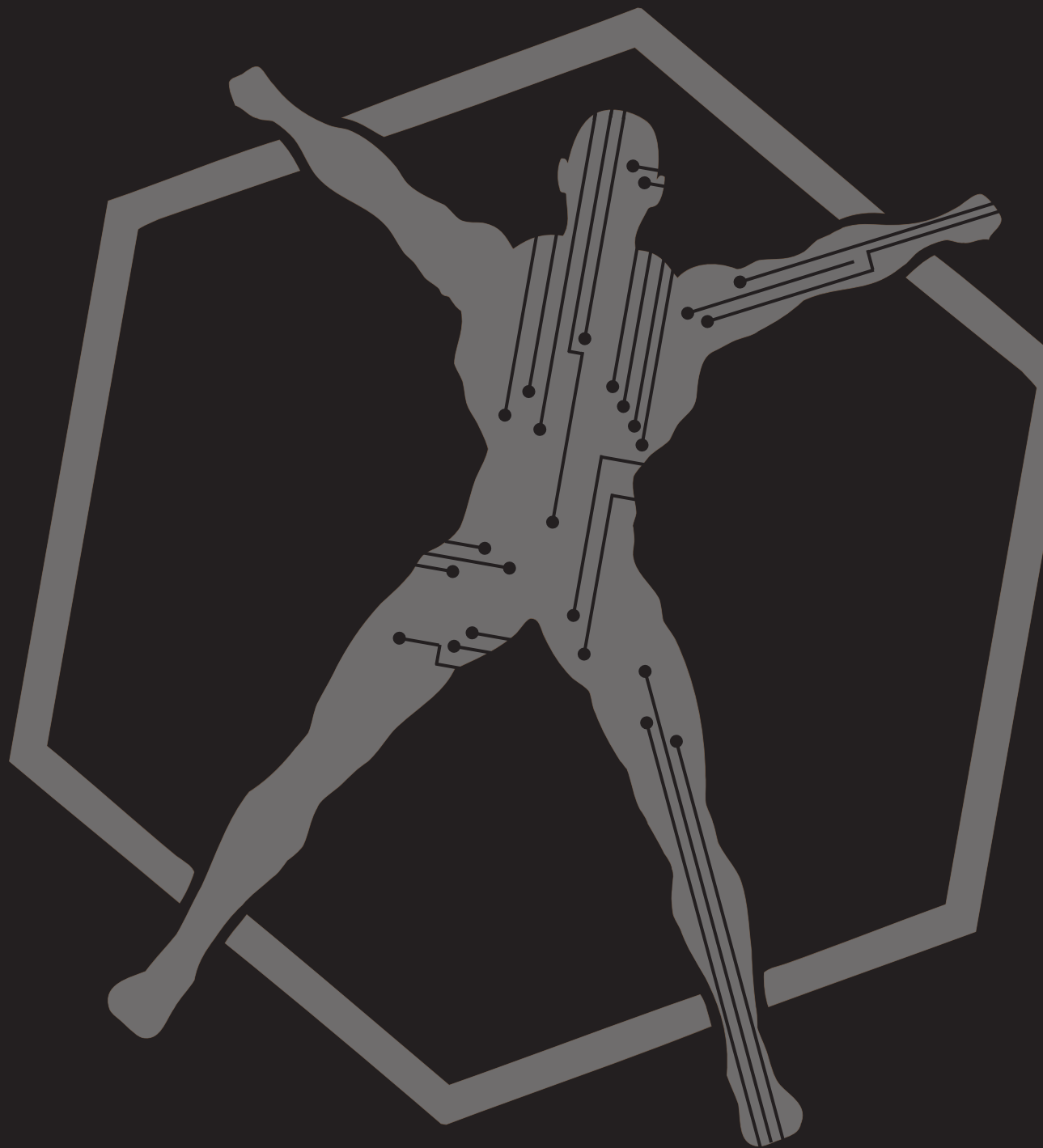
However, there are occasions when the danger isn't immediate at all but the character should still probably get a Psychological Bonus. For example, consider a character who's trapped in a haunted house with some deadly horror, frantically trying to find a way to escape to safety. His beloved wife and children aren't in any danger at all — but the thought of them might spur him to greater (or better-applied) effort, which the GM represents by providing a Psychological Bonus.

3. Frequency of the Bonus: Generally speaking, a character should only get a Psychological Bonus when it's *really* important, the situation is particularly desperate or perilous, and the like. Rarely should they get more than one or two per game session. In some respects the GM should analogize this to Pushing a power, something that's under the character's direct control but that he should only do for crucial, heroic, or life-saving actions (see 6E2 134).

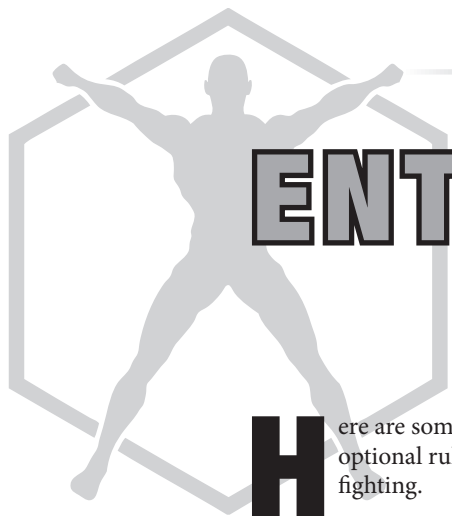
Of course, even if the GM doesn't want to grant Psychological Bonuses as a campaign rule, a character could buy a similar ability with Character Points and a Limitation reflecting the fact that it only works when the appropriate Psychological Complication is involved.

Vulnerability

See page 24 regarding the interaction of Vulnerability and Damage Negation.



CHAPTER THREE
COMBAT AND
ADVENTURING



ENTERING COMBAT & FIGHTING

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for entering combat and fighting.

Aborting An Action

If a character's suffering a DCV penalty based on a previous action and he Aborts to a defensive action, whether doing so removes the DCV penalty is up to the GM. As noted on 6E2 21, allowing characters to Abort to eliminate DCV penalties they've deliberately subjected themselves to so they can obtain some benefit (the example given being moving at Noncombat speeds) generally shouldn't be allowed. However, if the GM chooses to allow a character to Abort to an action that would eliminate an existing DCV penalty (such as to Dodge or Block), the "resetting" of DCV happens immediately when the Abort takes place. Otherwise the standard rule about when a penalty disappears applies.

ABORTING TO LIMITED DEFENSIVE ABILITIES

Whether a character can Abort to a defensive ability with Limitations like *Concentration* or *Extra Time* is up to the GM. Generally speaking the *HERO System* rules are very forgiving about Aborting to defensive powers, due to their dramatic appropriateness and utility. However, that doesn't mean you should distort common sense or dramatic realism beyond the breaking point. If a power's Limited in such a way (with, say, Extra Time) that it seems unlikely it could be prepared or used at a moment's notice, the GM has to take that into account in deciding whether it can be Aborted to, as discussed on 6E2 21.

In the case of Delayed Effect specifically, assuming a defensive power's already been prepared and "stored," using it normally only takes a Half Phase Action. Therefore characters should normally be allowed to Abort to use it. However, if it hasn't yet been "stored," or if there are other Limitations involved that may affect the consideration, the GM should take them into account in making his call.

ACTIONS WHICH TAKE NO TIME

If a character can activate a defensive power that takes no time to use (for example, one with a *Trigger Advantage* bought that way), then he can

activate it automatically at any time. He doesn't need to Abort to bring it into play, since activating it's an action which takes no time. However, being able to activate it at any time doesn't mean being able to activate it *first* at any time — the GM may require the character to succeed with a DEX Roll to determine if his activation of his defensive power occurs before he gets hit with an attack (see 6E2 19). If the character chooses to Abort to activate the defensive power, he automatically gets to act first, making Aborting a useful option even for powers that take no time to activate.

COMBAT SKILLS SYSTEM

Page 9 discusses an optional Skill Difficulty system that makes the Skill resolution rules work like standard *HERO System* combat. The flip side of that coin is that you can rework the combat rules to function like the standard Skill rules, with battles decided by Skill Versus Skill Contests rather than Combat Values. This section describes how that would work.

Note that the probabilities in the Combat Skill System differ from those of the standard OCV versus DCV system. The tables on 6E2 280-81 give some idea of the changes, but also keep in mind that in a Skill Versus Skill Contest the attacker has to succeed by a greater margin than the defender, which further alters the probabilities. (See the accompanying Skill Versus Skill Contest Probabilities table for an analysis of the percentage chance to succeed in the Combat Skill System.) Generally speaking characters' attacks will succeed less often in the Combat Skills System, which may work well for more "gritty" or "realistic" campaigns.

Characteristics

Since the Combat Skill System doesn't use Combat Value at all, OCV, DCV, OMCV, and DMCV are all eliminated from the list of Characteristics.

Since DEX is the basis for most combat-related Skills (see below), the GM should consider increasing its cost to 3 Character Points per point (or more) to reflect its increased importance and utility. If he does this, he should adjust the cost of Skill Levels with Agility Skills as well. Similarly, since EGO is the basis for Mental Combat Skills, the GM may want to increase the cost of EGO.

Skills

Skills become the crucial element for *HERO* System combat in the Combat Skill System.

FIGHTING SKILLS

In the Combat Skills System, various *Fighting Skills* (FSs) replace Combat Value. These include:

STRIKE

All characters have a Strike roll equal to their DEX Roll for free; they can improve this roll at the standard cost for buying up FSs (see below). They use this for basic unarmed combat, powers like Blast and Drain, and so forth (but not necessarily for weapons and shields; see below). For Mental Powers, a character's Strike roll equals his EGO Roll.

At the GM's option, a character can base his Strike roll (and perhaps other FS rolls) on a Characteristic other than DEX. For example, a strong character who relies on brute force to batter past his target's defenses might base his FSs on STR instead of DEX.

OTHER COMBAT MANEUVERS

Each of the Standard and Optional Combat Maneuvers becomes a separate FS; all characters have a roll with each Combat Maneuver equal to their DEX Roll for free; they can improve this roll at the standard cost for buying up FSs (see below). For example, a character might have Block 12-, Grab 13-, Move Through 12-, Move By 14-, and Dive For Cover 12-.

The OCV and DCV modifiers for Combat Maneuvers become corresponding modifiers to the character's FS rolls. For example, if a character performs a Move By, he suffers a -2 penalty when using his *Move By* Skill to attack, and suffers a -2

penalty on all FSs used to defend himself from attacks. If a character Dodges, he gets a +3 bonus on all FS rolls to avoid or protect himself from attacks.

Similarly, other CV modifiers associated with Combat Maneuvers convert to Skill Roll penalties. For example, when performing multiple Blocks (6E2 58), a character suffers a cumulative -2 Skill Roll penalty for each Block after the first. In the case of Maneuvers that halve the user's DCV (like Brace and Multiple Attack), reduce all of his defensive FS rolls by half. For example, if a character has a DEX Roll of 12-, when he uses that roll to counter an attack and he's suffering from "½ DCV," reduce his DEX Roll to 6-.

MARTIAL ARTS

Each Martial Maneuver has its own DEX-based Skill Roll, just like ordinary Combat Maneuvers. However, characters have to pay Character Points for their Martial Maneuver Skills. A character must buy each Martial Maneuver as a separate Skill at the specified rate (see below).

Under the standard rules, a character has to spend a minimum of 10 Character Points on Martial Arts. In the Combat Skill System, a character has to buy some minimum number of Martial Maneuver FSs, as determined by the GM; he can't just buy one or two. Typically the minimum is three to four, but it could be as high as five or more. This may depend on the cost of Martial Maneuver FSs (see below); the cheaper the Martial Maneuver FSs, the higher the minimum number purchased tends to be.

KEEPING COMBAT VALUE

If you want to use the Combat Skills System, but don't like the potential emphasis it places on DEX, you can keep OCV, DCV, OMCV, and DMCV as Characteristics (with their standard point cost) and use them as the basis for Fighting Skills. Instead of basing FSs on DEX Rolls, base them on a value of (8 + OCV) (or OMCV, for Mental Combat). That yields a starting value of 11- for FSs for a character who doesn't spend any points to increase his OCV.



SKILL VERSUS SKILL CONTEST PROBABILITIES

Defender's Roll	Attacker's Roll												
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
8	21.64	32.14	42.38	54.35	66.67	76.82	85.54	91.70	95.14	97.58	98.66	99.22	99.35
9	19.47	28.82	39.78	51.56	62.41	73.24	81.71	88.48	93.04	96.19	97.69	98.54	99.06
10	15.91	24.38	34.73	45.83	58.03	68.04	76.84	84.25	89.51	93.34	95.88	97.55	98.63
11	13.69	20.94	28.75	39.11	49.91	60.55	70.46	78.75	85.31	90.51	93.71	95.97	97.73
12	11.00	16.73	24.13	32.67	42.23	53.29	63.14	70.96	78.82	85.46	90.34	93.40	95.91
13	8.02	12.72	18.74	26.66	35.10	44.29	54.35	63.66	71.94	79.36	85.41	89.78	93.82
14	5.14	9.15	13.99	19.93	27.08	35.76	44.72	54.91	63.52	71.81	79.63	85.56	90.43
15	3.27	5.59	9.03	14.10	20.27	27.89	35.98	44.95	54.46	63.06	71.96	78.61	85.21
16	2.06	3.68	6.06	9.54	14.37	20.80	27.82	36.90	44.95	53.81	63.85	72.60	78.53
17	1.03	2.04	3.62	6.01	9.54	14.53	21.06	28.49	36.32	45.23	53.58	62.99	72.30
18	0.52	1.15	2.08	3.47	6.27	9.74	13.91	19.92	27.83	36.17	45.32	54.47	64.21
19	0.26	0.68	1.23	2.01	3.67	6.07	9.76	14.79	20.93	28.13	36.67	45.53	54.84
20	0.16	0.32	0.59	1.38	2.58	4.04	6.45	9.97	14.79	21.31	28.58	36.42	45.43

Numbers indicate the percentage chance for the attacker to succeed (*i.e.*, to win the Skill Versus Skill Contest). These numbers are approximations, and will deviate slightly from the mathematically precise probabilities.

WEAPON FIGHTING SKILLS

Common Melee Weapons

- Axes
- Daggers/Knives
- Hammers
- Maces
- Picks
- Polearms
- Spears
- Swords
- Shields
- Small Shields
- Medium/Large Shields

Uncommon Melee Weapons

- Flails
- Garrote
- Lances
- Nets
- Staffs
- Whips

Common Martial Arts Melee Weapons

- Chain & Rope Weapons
- Ninja Weapons
- Rings
- War Fan

Common Missile Weapons

- Bows
- Crossbows
- Javelins/Thrown Spears
- Thrown Knives/Axes/Darts

Uncommon Missile Weapons

- Blowguns
- Boomerangs
- Slings

Siege Engines (Skill Roll is based on INT, not DEX)

- Ballista
- Catapult
- Siege Tower
- Trebuchet

Small Arms

- Assault Rifles/LMGs
- Handguns
- Rifles
- Shotguns
- Submachine Guns
- Thrown Grenades

Uncommon Modern Weapons

- Flamethrowers
- Grenade Launchers
- General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns
- Shoulder-Fired Weapons (Skill Roll may be based on INT, not DEX)

Vehicle Weapons (Skill Roll may be based on INT, not DEX)

- Purchased separately by vehicle

WEAPONS AND SHIELDS

In Heroic campaigns where characters don't pay Character Points for weapons, armor, shields, and similar equipment, but instead ordinarily buy Weapon Familiarities and the like, the use of weapons and shields requires Fighting Skills. (Characters don't have to buy a Skill to wear and use armor.)

Each weapon and shield is a separate FS, as indicated on the accompanying table. Weapons that ordinarily don't require a WF (Clubs, Fist-Loads, Unarmed Combat, Thrown Rocks) are used with the *Strike* FS (or *Throw*, in the case of Thrown Rocks). For example, a character might have Swords 14-, Axes 12-, Maces 12-, Bows 11-, Crossbows 11-, and Medium/Large Shields 13-.

For siege engines, some vehicular weapons, and some other types of weapons (such as many shoulder-fired weapons), the FS's Skill Roll is based on INT, not DEX. Using these weapons properly depends more on a character's knowledge and perceptiveness than on his deftness.

BUYING FIGHTING SKILLS

The GM has to decide how much Fighting Skills cost. Since characters typically have to buy a lot of them, setting their cost is an important game balance consideration.

On one end of the spectrum, the GM might want FSs to be expensive for "realism" purposes, to diminish characters' capacity to purchase other game elements, or simply to keep character sheets clean. In this case, treat FSs like Agility Skills, with a cost of 3 Character Points for a DEX-based roll; each +1 to the roll costs +2 Character Points.

A "middle of the road" approach prices FSs like many Background Skills: 2 Character Points for a base 11- roll, with each +1 to the roll costing +1 Character Point.

The other end of the spectrum is to make FSs as inexpensive as possible, so characters can save points for other things. In this case, a character can buy a DEX-based roll with a Fighting Skill for 1 Character Point; each +1 to the roll costs +1 Character Point.

Of course, all FSs don't have to use the same cost structure; the GM can make some more expensive than others based on campaign setting considerations, his opinion about which weapons are "realistically" easier or harder to learn (see page 14), game balance, or other factors. For example, if the GM doesn't like the fact that most characters favor Swords and Daggers/Knives as their weapons, he might make those FSs expensive, while other weapons are comparatively cheap to encourage characters to use them.

In particular, the GM should consider the cost of Martial Maneuver FSs. Even if most FSs are relatively expensive, the GM might make Martial Maneuver FSs somewhat cheaper. This may tie into the minimum number of Martial Maneuver FSs the GM requires characters to buy (see above).

Another question for the GM to consider is the issue of Skill Enhancers. He could create one or more Skill Enhancers to make some types of FSs less expensive to purchase, or to encourage

characters to buy some types of FSs they might otherwise overlook. For example, each category in the Weapon Fighting Skills table (Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Uncommon Missile Weapons, and so on) could define a Skill Enhancer. That way a character who wants to specialize in, say, Uncommon Melee Weapons could buy all of them and save 6 Character Points in the process.

SKILL LEVELS

When the GM implements a Combat Skill System, he has to take into account the potential effect of Combat Skill Levels and other Skill Levels. First, Skill Levels themselves cannot be used to improve a character's FS rolls; an Agility Skill Level applies to all DEX-based Skills *other than* FSs. The only way to improve an FS is CSLs or PSLs.

The GM may also want to adjust the cost of CSLs and PSLs. If FSs are inexpensive, CSLs/PSLs may not seem like a "good deal" to characters. On the other hand, if FSs cost a lot of Character Points, characters may gravitate toward buying just a few of them at the minimum level and then investing in lots of CSLs to improve them. Neither situation is necessarily desirable; ideally the cost of FSs and CSLs should make them equally attractive to characters, allowing two different characters to reach the point of relatively balanced effect on the game via different routes but for approximately the same cost.

Combat

Instead of using Combat Value to determine whether characters hit or miss in combat, the Combat Skills System uses a series of *Fighting Skills* in Skill Versus Skill Contests. The attacking character uses the FS for his attack, and the target uses the FS for some defensive ability (such as Medium/Large Shields 13- or Block 14-). If the attacker wins the Contest, he hits; if he loses, the target's successfully defended himself.

Example: *Baran the warrior is using his sword and shield (Swords 13-, Medium/Large Shields 14-) to fight a Northron berserker (Axes 13-, Block 13-, Dodge 13-). The fearsome berserker, driven by rage, attacks first, pitting his Axes 13- against Baran's Medium/Large Shields 14-. The berserker rolls a 10, succeeding by 3; Baran also rolls a 10, which means he succeeds by 4 and wins the Contest. Baran's shield turns the berserker's axe-blow aside!*

Now Baran responds in kind, slashing with his sword at the berserker's exposed side. He rolls an 8 with his Swords 13-, succeeding by 5. The berserker attempts a Block but only rolls a 13, succeeding exactly. Again Baran wins the Contest, so he gets to roll the damage for his sword-blow.

ABORTING

Since all characters have FSs in the defensive Combat Maneuvers (like Block and Dodge) for free, the Combat Skill System involves relatively little Aborting — characters can always bring a defensive FS into play to protect themselves from an attack. However, the GM may, at his option, penalize defensive FSs by -1, -2, or more in situations when characters would have to Abort to a defensive ability under the standard *HERO System* rules. If the character chooses to Abort, he eliminates this penalty.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

Combat Modifiers work the same way in the Combat Skill System as they do in the regular rules. However, instead of modifying OCV/DCV, they modify the Skill rolls involved in a given Contest. For example, a character attacking a Huge target gets a +6 bonus to his attack FS roll due to his size.

MARGIN OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE

The standard *HERO System* rules generally don't take the margin of success (or failure) on an Attack Roll into account. A character whose Attack Roll succeeds by 0 or 1 rolls the same number of dice of damage as he does when his Attack Roll succeeds by 5.

Typically the Combat Skill System works the same way. However, the GM can change this if he wishes so that the character who wins a Skill Versus Skill Contest in combat gains an advantage. Some possible outcomes include:

- for each point by which an attack succeeds, it does +1 point of damage (STUN for Normal Damage attacks, BODY for Killing Damage attacks)
- for each point by which an attack succeeds, the attacker may add or subtract (his choice) 1 from his Hit Location roll (thus allowing him to "shift" the Location he hits to a more favorable one)
- for each full 2 points by which a defense succeeds, the defender gets a +1 bonus to his FS roll to attack the character who just missed him, provided that attack occurs in the defender's next Phase and nothing's happened in the meantime to alter the situation (such as his attacker getting to attack again, moving away from him, or suffering Knockback)
- for each full 2 points by which a defense succeeds, the defender gets a +1 bonus to his FS roll to defend against the next attack from that same attacker, provided that attack occurs within 3 Segments

ATTACK VERSUS ATTACK

The assumption in the Combat Skill System is that one character uses an "offensive" FS (such as Strike, Sword, or Crossbow) to try to hit his target, and the target uses a "defensive" FS (such as Block, Dodge, or Medium/Large Shields) to try to protect himself. For more "dynamic" (and perhaps lethal) combat, the GM can simply allow both characters engaged in a combat to roll with whatever FS they prefer. A character who succeeds can declare that his success is a hit on the target *or* protection against the target's attack (though of course "success" here means succeeding by a sufficient margin to win the Skill Versus Skill Contest). Thus you could end up with a Phase where two combatants each hit one another because they both declared "attack" instead of defense.


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COMBAT MODIFIERS & MANEUVERS

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for Combat Modifiers and Combat Maneuvers.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

ENCUMBRANCE

If a character buys Encumbrance PSLs, they do *not* counteract the movement penalty imposed by Encumbrance, only the DCV penalty. A character could buy such an ability as +Running (or other Movement Power) with the Limitation *Only To Offset The Encumbrance Penalty* (-2).

TARGET SIZE

The accompanying Expanded Target Size Table provides the modifiers for attacking truly large targets, such as planets. See page 115 for more information.

UNFAMILIAR WEAPON

Even if you don't want to adopt the "difficulty of learning" optional form of Weapon Familiarity described on page 14 in full, you can still adopt the idea of varying the Unfamiliar Weapon penalty based on "difficulty of learning" into your campaign. Just group weapons into four categories: Simple (no Unfamiliar Weapon penalty, as with Clubs and Thrown Rocks); Easy (-1 Unfamiliar Weapon penalty); Difficult (-2 Unfamiliar Weapon penalty); and Very Difficult (-3 Unfamiliar Weapon penalty). The accompanying table provides some suggestions, but the GM has the final say based on his own opinions and what he thinks will work best for his campaign. Using this rule an untrained character could, for example, pick up a mace and use it without too much

difficulty, but is in real trouble if the only weapon available to him is a sword.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

Block

The cumulative -2 OCV penalty for performing multiple Blocks cannot be reduced or eliminated with Penalty Skill Levels. To do that, a character should allocate Combat Skill Levels to counteract the penalty.

REDEFINING BLOCK SOME MORE

The sidebar on APG 167 has some suggestions for redefining how Block works if you don't like its absolute mechanic. Here are some more suggestions along those lines:

- instead of stopping an attack entirely, Block functions something like Roll With A Punch — it reduces the damage the character takes (in essence making it extra defense that only applies if the character's Block roll succeeds). The GM has to decide just how much protection Block provides. It could halve the damage (again, like Roll With A Punch), reduce it by some other percentage (such as 25%), or provide a flat amount of defense (such as 10 points or 20 points).
- instead of stopping attacks, Block allows a character to minimize their effects by changing the Hit Location that gets hit. If the GM adopts this change, then characters are allowed to declare a Block *after* an attack hits them (again, something like Roll With A Punch), instead of having to declare that they're Blocking before an attack's made. If the Block succeeds exactly, the character can add or subtract 1 point from the Hit Location rolled; for each additional point by which it's made, he can add or subtract another point. Typically the character Blocking opts to take the blow on his arm or leg if he can, since they take less damage from attacks.

The GM may restrict which Locations a character can shift an attack to based on the angle of the attack and other factors. For example, if an attacker strikes at a character's head from behind,

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UNFAMILIAR WEAPON VARIATION

Simple Weapons: Clubs, Fist-Loads, Thrown Rocks, Unarmed Combat

Easy Weapons: Blowguns, Hammers, Handguns, Maces, Picks, Rifles, Shotguns, Thrown Grenades

Difficult Weapons: Assault Rifles, Axes, Crossbows, Daggers/Knives, Javelins/Thrown Spears, Lances, Polearms, Spears, Staffs, Submachine Guns, Thrown Knives/Axes/Darts

Very Difficult Weapons: Bows, Chain & Rope Weapons, Flails, Swords

EXPANDED TARGET SIZE TABLE

Size Category	OCV Bonus	Example
Large (up to 2x human sized)	+2	Most types of giant
Enormous (3-4x human sized)	+4	Cloud or storm giant
Huge (5-8x human sized)	+6	Lesser dragon, megalodon
Gigantic (9-16x human sized)	+8	Greater dragon, kraken, giant ape
Gargantuan (17-32x human sized)	+10	Sea serpent
Colossal (33-64x human sized)	+12	Roc, small asteroid
65-125x human sized	+14	
126-250x human sized	+16	Empire State Building
251-500x human sized	+18	Average asteroid
501-1,000x human sized	+20	
1,001-2,000x human sized	+22	
2,001-4,000x human sized	+24	
4,001-8,000x human sized	+26	Mt. Everest (based on base radius)
8,001-16,000x human sized	+28	
16,001-32,000x human sized	+30	
32,001-64,000x human sized	+32	
64,001-125,000x human sized	+34	
125,001-250,000x human sized	+36	Large asteroid
250,001-500,000x human sized	+38	Ceres (largest asteroid)
500,001-1 million x human sized	+40	
1.1-2 million x human sized	+42	Pluto
2.1-4 million x human sized	+44	Mercury, Mars
4.1-8 million x human sized	+46	Earth, Venus
8.1-16 million x human sized	+48	
16.1-32 million x human sized	+50	Uranus, Neptune
32.1-64 million x human sized	+52	Saturn
64.1-125 million x human sized	+54	Jupiter

he might not be able to interpose one of his arms in time... but he could duck and turn slightly to take the blow on his shoulder instead.

Grab

Generally speaking, a limb being used to perform a Grab can only Grab; the character can't do anything else with it, including using Foci attached to that arm to perform other actions. This wouldn't necessarily prevent a character from using a "passive" ability in an arm-based Focus (such as activating his Force-Field Bracers to protect himself, or a Flight Ring so he can fly away with the Grabbee), but he certainly can't make other attacks unless the GM permits this for some reason. Even if the GM permits it, he may then consider the Grabbee to be Grabbed as if with one hand (see 6E2 65) by default.

Even if the target of a Grab is willing, is already Entangled, or is subject to similar hindrances, a character Grabbing him still suffers the standard CV modifiers. A Grab is a Grab, regardless of the state of the target. However, as always, the GM can adjust the rules as he sees fit to address the particulars of any given situation in the game.

Grab By

By a strict technical interpretation, in many cases a character who's immediately resisting a Grab By (as in the example on 6E2 68) should only get to roll his Casual STR to resist (per the rule on 6E2 64). However, there are other factors for the GM to consider. With a normal Grab, a character's going to remain Grabbed and will have an opportunity to resist using his full STR soon enough. With a Grab By, failure means he loses the Focus (or other object) — the target will *not* have a chance to resist using his full STR unless he chases the other character down and engages him in some sort of tug-of-war. That being the case, either (a) many characters are likely to Abort to use their full STR to resist a Grab By (it's not precisely a "defensive action," but it's close enough); and/or (b) in light of the game balance issues involved the GM may allow the victim to use his full STR to resist regardless.

The same considerations apply to the optional *Disarm By Combat Maneuver* (APG 167), if the campaign uses that.

Haymaker

If two or more characters make Haymaker attacks on their Phases in the same Segment, in the next Segment those attacks are resolved in the order in which they were begun. Thus, a character who Holds his Action and eventually decides to perform a Haymaker will resolve his attack after

one who performed his own Haymaker as soon as possible. Of course, depending on the outcome of the individual Haymakers, the earliest ones resolved may ruin or invalidate the later ones.

Example: *Galaxia (DEX 25) and Grond (DEX 18) both have a Phase on Segment 6. They're both fighting Tetsuronin. Both decide to Haymaker their attacks (their Blast and punch, respectively). Assuming they both take their Phases when they occur in the Segment, in Segment 7 Galaxia's Haymakered Blast is resolved first, since she began performing hers first.*

However, suppose that Galaxia decided to Hold her Action for some reason and didn't act until DEX 10. In that case Grond's Haymaker is resolved first since it was performed first. The fact that Galaxia has a higher DEX doesn't affect the situation.

Multiple Attack

As noted on 6E2 74, a Combined Attack is considered a form of Strike. Therefore it only requires a single Attack Roll regardless of how many powers the character Combines.

If a character makes a Combined Attack, and he uses velocity (from, say, a Move By) to increase the damage, the velocity applies equally to both attacks to increase their damage — though many GMs are likely to be wary of such an attack, and may not even permit it since it's too much like adding a Combat Maneuver into a Combined Attack sequence.

If a character has an HA, he can perform a Multiple Attack with one or more Martial Maneuvers and add the HA damage to both of them. Of course, he has to pay the END cost for both the STR used and the HA for each attack.

See page 50 regarding using two or more powers with Gestures or Incantations in a Multiple Attack.

Throw

If a character has Martial Throw, and has Combat Skill Levels with his Martial Arts, those CSLs do not apply to regular (non-Martial) Throws.

Trip

Trip is subject to the same weight limits as Throw (and Martial Maneuvers built with the Throw Element, including Legsweep and similar "trip maneuvers"). As always, the GM is free to alter this where it seems artificially restrictive or not in tune with the nature of his campaign.

Choke

STR does not add to the damage done by a Choke.

Dive For Cover

Once an attacker declares who he's attacking, generally he cannot change to another target once he realizes that his declared target is Diving For Cover — he's already stated what his Action will be and must abide by that decision. But as always, combat is a dynamic situation where the GM sometimes has to use his common and dramatic sense while running the game. Remember, it's not as if the characters are literally standing there, declaring their Actions one at a time and performing them in order. Essentially it's all happening at once, with the initiative order being instituted to (a) give an advantage to characters who've paid to have faster reflexes, and (b) provide a way to determine what happens to whom that's easy for gamers to use. Therefore the GM may sometimes allow a character to switch targets, if he thinks there's good reason to do so.

DAMAGE

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for determining and taking damage.

Adding Damage

In case the Damage Classes Quick-Reference Tables on 6E2 101 aren't enough for you, pages 66-67 have expanded versions of those tables.

Taking Damage

Sometimes characters are attacked with Killing Attacks that are AVAD and Does BODY, where the defense is defined as Flash Defense, Mental Defense, or Power Defense. In this case, the character's total exotic defense (for example, both normal Mental Defense and Resistant Mental Defense) apply to the STUN damage. Only the character's Resistant exotic defense applies to the BODY damage. The character's ordinary defenses (such as his regular PD and ED) don't apply at all.

Effects Of Damage

The rule on 6E2 106 stating that an unconscious character can be killed by another character using a Full Phase Action applies to unconscious Player Characters, not just to NPCs. But of course, as with every other rule in the rulebook, it should always be applied with common and dramatic sense. A GM who frequently kills off PCs may discover that players don't want to return to his game, and a player who has a reputation for killing other PCs will soon find every character's hand against him.

VARYING THE KNOCKED OUT RECOVERY TIME

6E2 106-07 discuss the rules for recovering from being Knocked Out. As noted in the Recovery Time Table, the time it takes to wake up after being Knocked Out depends on how badly Knocked Out a character is (*i.e.*, how far below 0 his STUN has dropped). The numbers are the same for everyone, regardless of CON, EGO, BODY, or other factors.

Some GMs may prefer to alter this rule so that "tougher" characters overcome the effects of being Knocked Out more quickly. Here are some possibilities to consider:

CON-BASED RECOVERY

Rather than basing the recovery on steps of -10 STUN (-0 to -10, -11 to -20, and so forth), define the steps by the character's CON (or perhaps BODY). For example, a character with 18 CON would have steps of -0 to -18, -19 to -36, and so on. Ignore Adjustment Powers for this purpose; even if a character's CON has been Drained or Aided, use his normal, un-Adjusted, CON to determine how quickly he recovers.

The benefit to this is that it takes the character's abilities into account — he paid for the higher CON, so he gets to wake up sooner. The drawback is that it makes it virtually impossible to keep high-CON characters (like "bricks" in Superhero games) unconscious for any length of time, and that it encourages "CON inflation" in general.

BOUGHT RECOVERY

Another option would be to allow characters to buy the ability to recover from being Knocked Out more quickly. Consider this a new Defense Power (and Special Power), *Rapid Recovery*. For every 2 Character Points, a character adds 1 STUN to the range of numbers defining each step on the Recovery Time Table.

Example: *Nighthawk may not be the strongest or sturdiest guy in the Champions Universe, but he has a will of unbreakable iron that allows him to shake off the effects of injury much faster than ordinary men. To represent this he spends 8 Character Points on Rapid Recovery. This adds 4 STUN to each level of the Recovery Time Table. Thus, he Recovers every Phase when he's at -0 to -14 STUN (instead of the usual -0 to -10), only on Post-Segment 12 when he's at -15 to -28 STUN (instead of the usual -11 to -20), only once a minute when he's at -29 to -42 STUN (instead of -21 to -30), and at the GM's discretion when he's at -43 STUN or below.*

Grond, one of the strongest superhumans in the Champions Universe, is so tough that it's virtually impossible to keep him Knocked Out — he's spent a whopping 30 points on Rapid Recovery! Therefore he Recovers every Phase when he's at -0 to -25 STUN, only on Post-Segment 12 when he's at -26 to -50 STUN, only once a minute when he's at -51 to -75 STUN, and at the GM's discretion when he's at -76 STUN or below.

Rapid Recovery tends to work best in campaigns where the GM restricts the amount of STUN characters can have. Otherwise a character may be better off to simply buy more STUN as a way of preventing himself from having to recover from being Knocked Out in the first place. The GM can, of course, reduce the cost of Rapid Recovery if he thinks that would encourage characters to buy it instead of more STUN.

EGO ROLL RECOVERY

Characters in fiction are often depicted as resisting the effects of injury by sheer force of will — not only does pain affect them less than it does ordinary people, but they shake off the effects of being Knocked Out even quicker. If the GM wants to reflect this in the rules for waking up after being Knocked Out, he can allow unconscious characters to make EGO Rolls. The roll suffers a penalty of -1 for each step down the Recovery Time Table the character's at (thus, -1 if he's at -0 to -10 STUN, -4 if he's at GM's discretion). If the character succeeds with his roll, he Recovers more quickly. Exactly how quickly is up to the GM; some possibilities include:

EXPANDED DAMAGE CLASSES QUICK-REFERENCE TABLE

NORMAL DAMAGE

DC	+0	+¼	+½	+¾	+1	+1¼	+1½	+1¾	+2
1	1d6	½d6	½d6	½d6	½d6	½d6	½d6	½d6	½d6
2	2d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	1d6	½d6	½d6	½d6
3	3d6	2d6	2d6	1½d6	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6
4	4d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6	2d6	1½d6	1½d6	1½d6	1d6+1
5	5d6	4d6	3d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6	2d6	2d6	1½d6
6	6d6	5d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2d6
7	7d6	5½d6	4½d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6	2½d6	2½d6	2d6+1
8	8d6	6d6	5d6	4½d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6	3d6	2½d6
9	9d6	7d6	6d6	5d6	4½d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6+1	3d6
10	10d6	8d6	6½d6	5½d6	5d6	4½d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6+1
11	11d6	9d6	7d6	6d6	5½d6	5d6	4d6+1	4d6	3½d6
12	12d6	9½d6	8d6	7d6	6d6	5d6+1	4½d6	4d6+1	4d6
13	13d6	10d6	8½d6	7½d6	6½d6	5½d6	5d6	4½d6	4d6+1
14	14d6	11d6	9d6	8d6	7d6	6d6	5½d6	5d6	4½d6
15	15d6	12d6	10d6	8½d6	7½d6	6½d6	6d6	5½d6	5d6
16	16d6	13d6	10½d6	9d6	8d6	7d6	6d6+1	6d6	5d6+1
17	17d6	13½d6	11d6	9½d6	8½d6	7½d6	6½d6	6d6+1	5½d6
18	18d6	14d6	12d6	10d6	9d6	8d6	7d6	6½d6	6d6
19	19d6	15d6	12½d6	11d6	9½d6	8½d6	7½d6	7d6	6d6+1
20	20d6	16d6	13d6	11½d6	10d6	9d6	8d6	7d6+1	6½d6
21	21d6	17d6	14d6	12d6	10½d6	9½d6	8d6+1	7½d6	7d6
22	22d6	17½d6	14½d6	12½d6	11d6	10d6	8½d6	8d6	7d6+1
23	23d6	18d6	15d6	13d6	11½d6	10d6+1	9d6	8d6+1	7½d6
24	24d6	19d6	16d6	13½d6	12d6	10½d6	9½d6	8½d6	8d6
25	25d6	20d6	16½d6	14d6	12½d6	11d6	10d6	9d6	8d6+1
26	26d6	21d6	17d6	15d6	13d6	11½d6	10d6+1	9½d6	8½d6
27	27d6	21½d6	18d6	15½d6	13½d6	12d6	10½d6	10d6	9d6
28	28d6	22d6	18½d6	16d6	14d6	12½d6	11d6	10d6+1	9d6+1
29	29d6	23d6	19d6	16½d6	14½d6	13d6	11½d6	10½d6	9½d6
30	30d6	24d6	20d6	17d6	15d6	13½d6	12d6	11d6	10d6

EXPANDED DAMAGE CLASSES QUICK-REFERENCE TABLE

KILLING DAMAGE

DC	+0	+¼	+½	+¾	+1	+1¼	+1½	+1¾	+2
1	1 point	1 point	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	½d6, 1d6-1	½d6	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	—	—
3	1d6	1d6-1	½d6	½d6	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point	1 point
4	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	½d6	½d6	½d6	1 point	1 point
5	1½d6, 2d6-1	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	½d6	½d6	1d6-1	1 point
6	2d6	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	½d6	1d6	½d6
7	2d6+1	2d6-1	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	1d6-1	½d6
8	2½d6, 3d6-1	2d6	2d6-1	1d6+1	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6	½d6
9	3d6	2d6+1	2d6	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6+1	1d6	1d6	1d6
10	3d6+1	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6-1	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6+1	1d6	1d6
11	3½d6, 4d6-1	3d6-1	2d6+1	2d6	2d6-1	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6+1	1d6
12	4d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6	1½d6	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6+1
13	4d6+1	3d6+1	3d6	2d6+1	2d6	2d6-1	1½d6	1d6+1	1d6+1
14	4½d6, 5d6-1	3½d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6	2d6-1	1½d6	1d6+1
15	5d6	4d6-1	3d6+1	3d6-1	2d6+1	2d6	2d6	1½d6	1½d6
16	5d6+1	4d6	3½d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6	2d6-1	1½d6
17	5½d6, 6d6-1	4d6+1	4d6-1	3d6+1	3d6-1	2d6+1	2d6+1	2d6	2d6-1
18	6d6	4½d6	4d6	3d6+1	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6	2d6
19	6d6+1	5d6-1	4d6+1	3½d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6+1	2d6
20	6½d6, 7d6-1	5d6	4d6+1	4d6-1	3d6+1	3d6-1	2½d6	2d6+1	2d6
21	7d6	5d6+1	5d6-1	4d6	3d6+1	3d6	3d6-1	2d6+1	2d6+1
22	7d6+1	5½d6	5d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1
23	7½d6, 8d6-1	6d6-1	5d6+1	4d6+1	4d6-1	3d6+1	3d6	2½d6	2d6+1
24	8d6	6d6	5d6+1	4d6+1	4d6	3d6+1	3d6+1	3d6-1	2½d6
25	8d6+1	6d6+1	5½d6	4½d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6+1	3d6	2½d6
26	8½d6, 9d6-1	6½d6	6d6-1	5d6-1	4d6+1	4d6-1	3d6+1	3d6	3d6-1
27	9d6	7d6-1	6d6	5d6	4d6+1	4d6	3½d6	3d6+1	3d6
28	9d6+1	7d6	6d6+1	5d6+1	4½d6	4d6	3½d6	3d6+1	3d6
29	9½d6, 10d6-1	7d6+1	6d6+1	5d6+1	5d6-1	4d6+1	4d6-1	3d6+1	3d6+1
30	10d6	7½d6	6½d6	5½d6	5d6	4d6+1	4d6	3½d6	3d6+1



- he immediately moves up one level on the Recovery Time Table, but only until he gets to take one Recovery. If that one Recovery isn't sufficient to move him into that category going forward, he returns to the former, worse, category.
- he immediately moves up one level on the Recovery Time Table; this is a lasting change, the character cannot "sink back" to the former, worse, category.
- if the EGO Roll succeeds exactly, the character adds 1 to the range of STUN numbers defining each step on the Recovery Time Table (as discussed under *Bought Recovery*, above). For each additional point by which the roll succeeds, add another 1 to the STUN range. The GM then recalculates the ranges for each level on the Table and determines whether the character can start taking Recoveries more quickly as a result. (If not, the GM has to decide whether the "bonus STUN range" stays in place until the character wakes up, and can perhaps be added to by further rolls, or automatically fades away.)

The GM should also decide whether characters get to make repeated EGO Rolls to improve their ability to Recover (such as one roll per Phase, every 6 Segments, or the like), or just get one roll. The greater the benefit obtained from a successful roll, the less likely the GM should be to allow repeated rolls. On the other hand, if a character fails his initial roll and the GM's inclined to be merciful (perhaps because having the character wake up quickly is dramatically appropriate), the GM might allow him to try again the very next Phase even if repeated rolls ordinarily aren't allowed.

OTHER COMBAT RULES & EFFECTS

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for other combat effects and circumstances.

Showdowns

Tense confrontations and “duels” between two characters are a staple of many types of adventure fiction. The stereotypical American example is two Wild West gunslingers stepping onto a dusty noon street to stare one another down and find out who’s the quickest draw and most accurate shot. But this same trope covers two Japanese samurai facing one another to determine who gets to cross a bridge first, two knights about to spur their horses and try to impale the other on the end of a lance, and even scruffy smugglers being cornered in spaceport bars by bounty hunters.

In regular *HERO System* terms, you can simulate this sort of conflict pretty easily:

1. The two characters each make Analyze rolls to assess one another’s level of skill. (If a character doesn’t have an appropriate form of Analyze, the GM might allow him to make a PER Roll or a roll with some other related Skill [such as KS: Famous Gunslingers], but if necessary should penalize the roll so that the character who actually paid for the proper Skill for this situation gets some benefit for his Character Points.)

Based on the outcome of the rolls, one of the characters may decide he can’t win the fight and withdraw. In some genres, settings, and situations this may be considered wise and honorable, in others despicable and cowardly.

2. The two characters make Fast Draw or DEX Rolls to determine who gets to act first, pursuant to the rules on 6E2 19. (Again, the GM may wish to penalize the DEX Roll, at least slightly, so that the character who paid Character Points for Fast Draw gets some benefit for them. Alternately, the GM can consider that both characters have Held Actions and automatically allow a character who succeeds with a Fast Draw roll to act first, per the rule on 6E1 76, but that makes for some mighty short and one-side showdowns unless a lot of characters buy Fast Draw.)

Just because one of the characters wins this Skill Contest doesn’t mean he *has* to act first. In

some showdowns he may let the other character attack first as a way of demonstrating his bravery, giving him legal justification for killing his opponent (“He shot at me first, it was self-defense!”), or the like.

Note that the Combat Maneuvers *Hipshot* (6E2 87) and *Hurry* (APG 169) aren’t applicable at this stage of a showdown — both characters have entered the showdown intentionally and are thus determining who goes first with Characteristic or Skill Rolls, not by the usual “highest DEX acts first” method. However, either of those Maneuvers may become crucial if the showdown goes on for multiple Phases.

3. Once one of the combatants makes an Attack Roll, the combat is resolved from that point on using the standard *HERO System* rules for determining damage, SPD/Phases, who acts first in a Phase, and the like.

That method should suffice for most showdowns. However, GMs desiring greater detail or more options can consider adding the following rules into the mix:

OUTDRAWING

One classic “bit” in Western gunslinger showdowns is for a gunslinger to let his opponent start to draw first, then *outdraw* him and get off the first shot — thus proving (a) his superior speed and accuracy, and (b) that he had to kill in “self defense” and thus can’t be convicted of murder.

To do this in a *HERO System* showdown, the character who wants to try to outdraw his opponent declared this before any roll is made to determine who acts first. He suffers a -3 penalty on that roll (a DEX Roll in most cases, though experienced duelists will almost certainly use Fast Draw instead). If he succeeds, then he allowed the other character to start to draw first, but was swift enough to outdraw him! If he fails, the other character automatically gets to attack first.

USING HIPSHOT AND HURRY

As noted above, Hipshot and Hurry don't apply in the initial confrontation of a showdown because it's not a situation where who has the highest DEX automatically acts first. If you want to make those Combat Maneuvers relevant to "the first shot" in a showdown, you can do this:

- for Hipshot, sacrificing 1 OCV gives the character +1 to his roll to determine who attacks first
- for Hurry, accepting the listed CV and Skill Roll penalties gives the character $+\frac{1}{2}d6+1$ to his roll to determine who attacks first (thus, +2 to +4). The Skill Roll penalties don't apply to the roll to determine who attacks first.

Endurance

If a character Pushes a Constant power (or a power with the Advantage *Costs END To Maintain*), he must pay the extra END cost for Pushing every Phase that he wants the Push effect to enhance the Constant power in addition to the power's standard END cost to maintain. If the Constant power only costs END to maintain, a character who wants to maintain a Pushed effect must pay the END cost for Pushing every Phase he keeps the power active.

If desired, the GM can substitute a *Power Skill* roll for the EGO Roll normally used to determine if a character can Push. This tends to reflect a character's adept use of his power for greater effect rather than sheer brute energy, but both are valid ways to explain the game effect of Pushing. The character still has to pay the standard END cost for Pushing, of course.

PAINFUL PUSHES

Given the relatively cheap cost of END, and how little of it some characters tend to use, charging a lot of extra END to Push an attack or power may not be much of a disincentive or balancing factor. A GM who wants to make Pushing more of a sacrifice for characters should consider requiring them to expend something other than END. For example:

- for every point of END spent to Push, a character must also spend 1 STUN. (Or the GM could set up some other ratio, like 1 STUN for every 2 END.)
- any amount of Pushing costs a character 1 BODY. Typically this is like any other BODY loss and heals at the rate of REC per month, but if the GM prefers he can treat it like a Drain BODY and establish a faster rate of "healing" (such as 1 BODY per hour or per day).

EXPANDING PUSH

The standard rules for Pushing only allow a character to add up to 10 Character Points to the Pushed ability — which may not be very much for a heavily-Advantaged power, or when the character has to face down an extremely tough foe. If desired, the GM can expand the scope of Pushing in various ways. Some possibilities include:

- allowing characters to Push for more than 10 Character Points' worth of effect. Either the GM establishes a higher upper limit (such as 20 Character Points), or he imposes no limit at all — the only restrictions are how much END the character's willing to spend. (Even in the latter case, the GM probably shouldn't allow a character to more than double the Active Points of a power by Pushing it.)
- allowing characters to Push to add Advantages to a power. For 5 points' worth of Pushing, a character can add a $+\frac{1}{4}$ Advantage; for 10 points' worth of Pushing, he can add a $+\frac{1}{2}$ Advantage. The Advantage only lasts for that one use of the power. The GM can forbid characters to apply certain Advantages this way; it's most appropriate for damage-enhancing Advantages on attacks (such as adding Armor Piercing or Penetrating to a Blast). Since Pushing costs END, in general characters shouldn't be allowed to add the *Reduced Endurance* Advantage this way.
- allowing characters to Push to remove Limitations from a power. For 5 points' worth of Pushing, a character can remove a $-\frac{1}{4}$ Limitation; for 10 points' worth of Pushing, he can remove a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation. The Limitation is only removed for that one use of the power. The GM can forbid characters to remove certain Limitations this way; for example, if a power has a Physical Manifestation, generally speaking that's so intrinsic to the power that characters shouldn't be allowed to get rid of it, even temporarily.

If the GM allows this rule in his campaign, he should monitor its use to make sure it doesn't make Power Frameworks less desirable or effective. If necessary he might couple the "Painful Pushes" rules (see above) to it so that Pushing for unusual effects costs a character more than just END.

MENTAL COMBAT



This section of APG2 covers the topic of mental combat: what it involves, how it occurs, and what maneuvers mentalists can use. As always, the rules on Mental Combat are optional; the GM should feel free to ignore or change them to suit his campaign, since psionics often work in very different ways from campaign to campaign.

Throughout this section there's a distinction between *Mental Combat* and *Mind-To-Mind Combat* (MTM Combat). Mental Combat is a combat between a mentalist and any other character (whether or not a mentalist) involving the use of a mental/psionic power of some sort. MTM Combat is a special "subtype" of Mental Combat that in most cases can only be engaged in by two or more mentalists. It can involve the use of normal mental powers or special Mental Combat Maneuvers that only mentalists can use. Typically non-mentalists cannot engage other characters (mentalist or otherwise) in MTM Combat, nor can they be attacked with MTM Combat or its special Mental Maneuvers.

Unless noted otherwise below, all rules in this section apply to both Mental Combat and MTM Combat.

ENTERING MENTAL COMBAT

In general, the rules for physical combat apply to Mental Combat, except where noted otherwise in the rulebook or this section. For example, SPD and Phases are determined the same way for either type of combat, and characters can Hold their Actions in Mental Combat just like they can in physical battles.

ABORTING AN ACTION

Characters can Abort to Actions that increase their DMCV or which may protect them from Mental Powers (such as Diving For Cover to get behind an obstacle that blocks Line Of Sight).

MENTAL FIGHTING

Here are the basic rules on mental combat from 6E2 39:

Most attacks use the ordinary Attack Rolls and CV already described. However, Mental Powers use *Mental Combat Value* (MCV) instead of the normal Combat Value. MCV can be divided into Offensive MCV (OMCV) and Defensive MCV (DMCV), just like CV. The Powers that use MCV are Mental Blast, Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Link, Mind Scan, Telepathy, and certain powers bought with the Advantage *Alternate Combat Value*. A character's base OMCV and DMCV are Characteristics.

Substituting MCV for CV, Mental Combat works just the same as normal combat. The Attack Roll is (OMCV + 11 - 3d6 roll = DMCV the character can hit). Apply any modifiers for Combat Skill Levels, just as normal. However, Mental Combat works on a Line Of Sight basis; if an attacker can see the target, he can attack him without suffering the Range Modifier. Typically, none of the Combat Modifiers apply either. [See below for more information.]

A character using a Mental Power uses EGO instead of DEX to determine when he acts in the Phase. If he wants to take any physical actions (such as making a Half Move) first, he must wait until his DEX comes up, move, and then use his Mental Power.

See *Mental Powers*, 6E1 148, for more details regarding Mental Powers and Line Of Sight.

In movies, comic books, and novels, it's rare for a mentalist to actually "miss" his target. Instead, any failure to succeed with a mental attack is explained as a special effect. Perhaps the mentalist couldn't concentrate enough to bring his powers to bear properly. Maybe "psychic static" interferes with his ability to locate the target. Or, most common of all, the mentalist hit the target, but somehow failed to "get a grip" on him, and therefore could do no damage or have no effect. The GM and players should remember this when describing mental combat. Visualization and conceptualization add a lot of flavor to psychic battles. For example, rather than just saying, "You miss" when a PC's MCV Attack Roll fails, he might say, "Your concentration seems to

be faltering — you can't get a firm grip on your opponent's mind this Phase."

At the GM's option, the more an MCV Attack Roll succeeds by, the stronger the mental attack. For every 1 point by which the roll succeeds, the victim suffers a -1 on his Breakout Rolls, a +5 on the Effect Roll, or some other penalty chosen by the GM.

OMCV CHECKLIST

- 1) Determine base OMCV (purchased by character as a Characteristic).
- 2) Add any applicable Combat Skill Levels the character wishes to use to increase his OMCV.
- 3) Apply any modifiers for the particular Combat Maneuver or Mental Maneuver the character uses.
- 4) Apply any Combat Modifiers.
- 5) Apply the Range Modifier (on those rare instances where it applies to a mental attack).
- 6) Apply any other modifiers.
- 7) Apply any modifiers that halve OMCV (or otherwise reduce it by a fraction or percentage). A character's OMCV can only be halved once, regardless of how many "halving" modifiers he's subject to.

DMCV CHECKLIST

- 1) Determine base DMCV (purchased by character as a Characteristic).
- 2) Add any applicable Combat Skill Levels the character wishes to use to increase his DMCV.
- 3) Apply any modifiers for the particular Combat Maneuver or Mental Maneuver the character uses.
- 4) Apply any Combat Modifiers.
- 5) Apply any other modifiers.
- 6) Apply any modifiers that halve DMCV (or otherwise reduce it by a fraction or percentage). A character's DMCV can only be halved once, regardless of how many "halving" modifiers he's subject to.

A character's DMCV cannot be reduced below 0, regardless of how many modifiers are applied.

A character can lower his DMCV to 0 whenever he wants as an Action that takes no time. His DMCV remains 0 until he's able to take a Zero Phase Action and declares that he wants to return it to normal. If prior to that time he Aborts to a defensive action, that immediately returns his DMCV to normal (and of course the action may increase it above that). A character who lowers his DMCV to 0 does so for all purposes; he cannot lower it to 0 just to, say, make it easier for a friend to establish mental contact while keeping it at full versus attackers.

A character's OMCV can be reduced below 0 — just apply the negative value of the OMCV to increase the target's DMCV and make the Attack Roll as if the attacker has OMCV 0. For example, a character with OMCV -3 can still attack — but his target is at +3 DMCV, and he uses OMCV 0 to make his Attack Roll, so his odds of hitting are mighty slim.

If a character already has a negative OMCV and suffers a further penalty that would halve his OMCV, halve the negative OMCV and apply that half amount to reduce the OMCV further; normal rounding rules apply. For example, if a character has OMCV -4, halving reduces it to -6 (-4 plus half of -4, or -2). If he has OMCV -3, halving reduces it to -4.

A reduction of OMCV or DMCV to 0 should generally be considered as "reducing MCV by a percentage," and thus be applied as the very last step in the OMCV or DMCV calculation. However, the GM may change this if he wishes (for example, he might consider the 0 to be the character's base MCV), and the rules may note other exceptions.

Modifiers that alter a character's MCV remain in effect from when they take effect until the beginning of the character's next Phase.

DMCV MODIFIERS

Most modifiers to DCV listed in the rulebook do not apply to DMCV. For example, an Entangled character is DCV 0, but retains his full DMCV; a character on a slippery surface, who's underwater, or who's blinded by a Sight Group Flash suffers no DMCV reduction. However, the following are some exceptions to this general rule:

- intoxicated characters are at -2 DMCV
- characters recovering from being Stunned are at ½ DMCV
- characters who are taking a Recovery are at ½ DMCV
- a sleeping or unconscious mind has DMCV 0

See below for further information on specific Combat Modifiers and other circumstances.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

As noted on 6E2 39, “[t]ypically, none of the Combat Modifiers apply [to Mental Combat].” For example, neither Encumbrance nor Environmental Conditions penalties affect OMCV or DMCV, and characters can’t Bounce mental attacks. However, here are a few notes, options, and suggestions for ones that do (or could).

AREA OF EFFECT ATTACK

See 6E1 152 for discussion of how Area-affecting mental powers work.

AUTOFIRE

See page 6E1 153 for discussion of how Autofire mental powers work.

BEHIND COVER

Behind Cover has no effect on Mental Combat — if the mentalist has LOS on any part of the target, he can attack him without suffering any penalties for the amount of cover the target is hiding behind. But total Cover breaks LOS, generally making it impossible to use a Mental Power on the target; see 6E1 148.

COORDINATED ATTACKS

A character can use a mental power that directly causes STUN damage, like an Mental Blast, in a Coordinated attack with physical attacks launched by other characters — though of course he may have to Hold his Action to do so. If he has the *Teamwork* Skill he uses it normally; if not, and the rules call for a DEX Roll, substitute an EGO Roll instead. (The GM can also have him make his Teamwork roll based on EGO instead of DEX, if preferred.)

Mental Blasts and other mental powers that directly cause damage to a target can be Coordinated with each other. The attackers must act on the same EGO; otherwise, the rules for Coordinating apply normally (though again, the GM may substitute EGO for DEX where desired). Mental Powers that don’t directly cause damage (such as Mind Control) cannot be Coordinated; to “Coordinate” them, use the rule for complementary Mental Powers on 6E1 152.

MULTIPLE ATTACKERS

At the GM’s option, characters can use this Combat Modifier with any mental attacks that can be Coordinated (see above) to represent the difficulty of “dodging” multiple psionic assaults at the same time. The defender suffers a -1 DMCV for every attacker, down to a minimum of ½ DMCV. (If the GM allows this, he may also want to allow a mental version of the *Defense Maneuver* Skill.)

SLEEPING/UNCONSCIOUS MINDS

A sleeping or unconscious mind has MCV 0. Thus, when a character’s Knocked Out, his MCV drops to 0 at the end of the Segment.

SPREADING

At the GM’s option, characters can Spread mental attacks (this isn’t normally allowed under the rules, per 6E2 50). This means that for every -½d6 of Mental Blast or 1d6 of a continuing-effect Mental Power sacrificed, the character gets +1 OMCV or fills one 1m radius Area with his attack. Alternately, instead of filling an Area the GM might allow a mentalist to spread for multiple minds regardless of location (provided they’re all within his current LOS) — +1 mind instead of each +1m radius Area filled.

SURPRISED

Generally, being Surprised doesn’t affect MCV. The GM might allow it anyway in situations where a mental attack is a *real* surprise. This would reduce the target to ½ DMCV and make him take 2x STUN or +10 Effect from the Power, as appropriate. However, since in many cases mental attacks (which are invisible and can be targeted from a long way away) will come as a “surprise,” constantly applying Surprised bonuses may give mentalist characters an unfair advantage. The GM should only grant the bonus if the mentalist does something especially surprising or unusual with his powers.

TARGET SIZE

Target Size has no effect on a character’s DMCV, but a very small character could be hard to perceive, and thus hard to obtain LOS to. On the other hand, perceiving and mentally targeting a large character could be really easy.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

Most Combat Maneuvers do not apply to Mental Combat, though a few exceptions are noted below. The rules for Mind-To-Mind Combat later in this section have psionic “equivalents” of some Combat Maneuvers, such as Block and Dodge.

BRACE

Since Mental Powers don't have Range Modifiers, Brace has no effect on them. If a character has a Mental Power to which the Range Modifier does apply, he may, at the GM's option, Brace with it.

COVER

Characters can use a mental attack to Cover a target, though the fact that Mental Powers aren't normally perceivable may diminish the value of the Maneuver (a character with Mental Awareness can perceive that a mentalist has him Covered). The -2 OCV penalty becomes a -2 OMCV penalty.

HAYMAKER

Characters can Haymaker with Mental Powers, as noted on 6E2 69. Standard rules for Haymakers apply to mental Haymakers unless the GM rules otherwise. For example, if the target moves even 1m between the time the mentalist starts the Haymaker and the time he launches it, the attack is spoiled.

MULTIPLE ATTACK

As discussed on 6E2 73-78, characters can Multiple Attack with mental powers, and can even make Multiple Attacks combining mental and non-mental powers. See 6E2 75 for rules on the effect this has on CV and MCV.

SET

Characters can use Set with Mental Powers; it provides +1 OMCV instead of OCV.

SNAP SHOT

Characters can execute Snap Shots with mental attacks with the GM's permission; the -1 OCV penalty becomes a -1 OMCV penalty instead.

STRAFE

Characters can Strafe using mental attacks. However, in addition to the standard DCV and OCV penalties, they also suffer an equal DMCV and OMCV penalties. The Range Modifier does not apply.

3

SIMPLIFIED MENTAL COMBAT

For gamers who'd like to use mental powers but prefer a more simplified system for using them in combat, try this:

1. Instead of buying Mental Powers as such, characters buy OMCV with one specific Mental Power (Mental Blast, Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, Telepathy, or one power built to simulate Mental Powers using ACV, AVAD, and other Power Modifiers; this is a -1 Limitation on the OMCV) and DMCV. OMCV and DMCV apply to the EGO Rolls described below, not to an Attack Roll (since there isn't one). Unless the GM permits, characters can't buy CSLs that apply to more than one Mental Power. Characters buy Mental Powers (like Mind Link) in the standard way.

2. When a character wants to use a Mental Power against another character, he declares his desired

effect and they engage in an EGO Roll Versus EGO Roll Contest (the GM can allow a character to substitute an appropriate *Power Skill* roll, or even require this). The attacker's OMCV adds to his EGO Roll; the defender's DMCV adds to his roll.

3. If the rolls tie or the target wins the Contest, he suffers no effect. If the attacker wins, for every point by which he wins the Contest he gets 10 points' worth of effect on a continuing-effect Mental Power's Effect Roll, or 1d6 of Mental Blast. (If this seems too much to the GM based on his campaign, he can reduce it to 5 points or ½d6.) The attacker then determines if he got a high enough Effect Roll to achieve his desired effect, or rolls his Mental Blast dice. The target gets Breakout Rolls as normal.

MENTAL DAMAGE

Here are a few expanded or clarified rules regarding the damage or effect caused by mental attacks.

DETERMINING DAMAGE

Each Damage Class of Mental Blast is $\frac{1}{2}d6$; each Damage Class of a continuing-effect Mental Power is 1d6. Standard rules about adding damage apply, but aside from the MTM Combat Maneuvers discussed later in this section, there are few (if any) ways to do so. Velocity, STR, ordinary Combat Maneuvers, and the like do not add damage to mental attacks.

HIT LOCATIONS

Mental Powers do not use the Hit Location rules. However, in a psionics-oriented campaign, the GM could use the optional Mental Hit Locations rules from APG 174.

IMPAIRING AND DISABLING

At the GM's option, in a psionics-oriented campaign an Impairing or Disabling injury may result in a loss of mental power. For an Impairing wound, some or all of the character's mental powers lose 10-30% ($\frac{1}{2}d6 \times 10\%$) of their Active Points for the listed time period. For a Disabling wound, instead of the "Limb paralyzed" result, substitute "30-50% Active Point loss for some or all mental powers" ($(\frac{1}{2}d6 + 2) \times 10\%$).

MIND-TO-MIND COMBAT

Mind-To-Mind (MTM) Combat is a special form of Mental Combat involving only Mental Maneuvers (whether Basic or Advanced) and any related mental powers. MTM Combat doesn't involve physical Actions or Maneuvers of any sort.

The MTM Combat Rules serve two functions:

- with the GM's permission, they give non-mentalists a way to resist mental attacks better
- they give mentalists methods of attacking each other that they don't have to spend Character Points for (in the case of Basic Mental Maneuvers) or which augment existing mental abilities for a relatively cheap cost (in the case of Advanced Mental Maneuvers)

Basic Mental Maneuvers are free; anyone the GM allows to can use them (see below). Advanced Mental Maneuvers cost Character Points; in a sense they're like "Mental Martial Arts" for mentalists. Unless the GM rules otherwise, the minimum amount a character can spend on Mental Maneuvers is 10 Character Points.

WHO CAN ENGAGE IN MTM COMBAT

Typically MTM Combat only occurs between mentalists, but at the GM's option a mentalist could use offensive Mental Maneuvers on non-mentalists, and/or non-mentalists can use defen-

sive Mental Maneuvers to protect themselves from mental attacks.

Alternately, the GM may establish requirements for the use of Mental Maneuvers. For example, perhaps a non-mentalist can buy a 1-point Talent to give him access to offensive Mental Maneuvers in MTM Combat. Non-mentalists must either have that Talent or have bought 1 point of Mental Defense (normally or through innate Resistant Protection, not through Barrier or Resistant Protection defined as a force-field or the like) to use defensive Mental Maneuvers.

TIME REQUIRED; ACTIONS

MTM Combat takes the same amount of time as physical combat and works within the same rules framework — it's not a separate thing, or something mentalists get to do "for free" without using up any Actions or Phases. In other words, using an offensive Mental Maneuver takes an Attack Action, and thus can only be performed on one of a character's Phases and ends that Phase.

Characters can use some regular Combat Maneuvers, like Haymaker and Multiple Attack, with mental attacks, as described earlier in this section. As indicated by the *Combat Maneuver* Basic Mental Maneuver below, this qualifies as MTM Combat when fighting another mentalist (or if the GM allows mentalists to engage in MTM Combat against non-mentalists).

Since MTM Combat doesn't allow characters to make physical Half Moves, a character who wants to move a few meters before attacking must wait until his DEX comes up in the order of combat for that Phase, make his physical Half Move, and then use his Mental Maneuver.

A mentalist can switch between MTM Combat and physical combat at will, without penalty. A character may take mental or physical actions in any of his Phases, unless some Complication, Limitation, or GM ruling dictates otherwise.

For GMs who prefer to run MTM Combat separately from physical combat (since it theoretically takes place "at the speed of thought" and outside the realm of physicality), see the "Mind Zone" adaptation of the *Speed Zone* rules on page 110. The GM could also let characters buy extra SPD, Mental SPD, SPD that only works for mental attacks, or the like (see APG 13-15).

ENDURANCE

Using any Mental Maneuver (Basic or Advanced) costs 1 END per Phase, unless indicated otherwise below. If a character uses multiple Mental Maneuvers at once (such as Defensive Concentration and Defensive Shield at once), he pays 1 END per Maneuver used per Phase. For Advanced Mental Maneuvers, this cost is in addi-

MENTAL COMBAT MANEUVERS TABLE

BASIC MENTAL MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Phase	OMCV	DMCV	Effects
Combat Maneuver	var	var	var	Character uses regular Combat Maneuver in MTM Combat
Compel	1	+0	+0	Victim forced to engage in minor physical action
Defensive Concentration	1	—	var	+3 Mental Defense or +1 DMCV, Abort
Defensive Effort	½	—	var	+3 Mental Defense or +1 DMCV, lose sensory awareness, Abort
Defensive Focus	0	—	var	+1 Mental Defense per 1 END spent, requires EGO Roll, Abort
Defensive Shield	½	—	var	+2 Mental Defense or +1 DMCV per -1 CV/Skill Rolls (up to +6 Mental Defense or +3 DMCV), Abort
Defensive Stand	½	—	var	+3 Mental Defense or +1 DMCV, character is DCV 0, Abort
Mental Strike	½	+0	+0	1d6 STUN damage per 10 EGO, requires EGO Roll
Mind Bar	½	+0	+0	“Block” a Mental Power the character also possesses, Abort
Mind Lock	1	+0	+0	Locks out a Mental Power the character also possesses

ADVANCED MENTAL MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Cost	Phase	OMCV	DMCV	Effects
Cerebral Blast	4	½	+2	+0	Mental Blast +1d6
Cerebral Crush	5	½	+0	-1	Normal Damage 2d6
Defensive Assault*	4	½	+0	+2	Mental Power +2d6
Defensive Cerebral Blast	4	½	+0	+2	Mental Blast +1d6
Defensive Mind Bar	5	½	+0	+1	EGO +10 with Mind Bar
Defensive Mind Lock	5	1	-2	+1	EGO +10 with Mind Lock
Ego Overwhelm	4	½	-2	-2	Mental Blast +4d6
Mental Overwhelm*	4	½	-1	-1	Mental Power +4d6
Mental Probe	5	½	+1	+3	Mental Blast
Offensive Assault*	4	½	+2	+0	Mental Power +2d6
Offensive Mind Bar	5	½	+2	-1	EGO +10 with Mind Bar
Offensive Mind Lock	5	1	+1	-2	EGO +10 with Mind Lock
Psychic Assault	4	½	-2	-2	Killing Damage ½d6

***:** When a character purchases one of these Maneuvers, he must define which of the four continuing-effect Mental Powers (Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Scan, Telepathy) it works with, and cannot change it thereafter. At the GM's option a character can buy them for other abilities that function as mental powers, such as a “psionic surgery” Mental Transform, by adjusting the way the Maneuver adds Damage Classes.

tion to the normal END cost for the mental attack used.

Basic Mental Maneuvers

Here's how the Basic Mental Maneuvers work. They don't cost Character Points; anyone permitted to do so by the GM can use them.

COMBAT MANEUVER

A character can use some of the regular Combat Maneuvers with Mental Powers in MTM Combat, as discussed above. Examples include Haymaking or Multiple Attacking with a mental attack, Covering someone with a mental power, using Set to gain a +1 OMCV bonus, and of course a Strike performed with any psionic power.

COMPEL

A character uses this Maneuver to force the target to take some physical action. The action in question must be a relatively minor one; examples include taking a single step, grasping an object, drawing a weapon, moving an object up to half a foot, and so forth. However, assuming a character succeeds with several Compel attacks in a row, he could force his opponent to take injurious or even lethal actions — for example, he could Compel the target to take several steps and walk off a cliff, or force him to grab a knife, draw it, and slash his own throat.

To make a Compel attack, the character must first succeed with an MCV Attack Roll against the target. Then he and the target both make EGO Rolls. If the attacker's roll equals or exceeds the target's roll, the target is Compelled to act; if the target's roll is higher than the attacker's, he resists the attack. At the GM's option, the target can Abort to use any defensive Basic Mental Maneuver that can add +1 DMCV to instead add +1 to his EGO Roll to resist Compel.

After a target is Compelled to do something, he can use a Half Phase Action (if he has one available before the attacker's next Compel attack) to reverse or counteract what he was Compelled to do. Until he does so, or until the attacker stops trying to Compel the target, the forced action remains in effect. (In this sense, Compel is a Constant attack — the character has to maintain it, or it stops working.) For example, suppose Glorang the Calm (SPD 3, DEX 16, EGO 20) uses his Phase in Segment 4 to Compel Tordarion the Clever (SPD 3, DEX 15, EGO 18) to draw his knife. When Tordarion's Action comes up in the initiative order later in Segment 4, he can use his Action to re-sheathe the knife if he wants to. If he does so, Glorang has to try to Compel him again in his next Phase to re-draw the knife (thus, a successful use of Compel typically involves precise timing or a mental duel). If he doesn't do so, the knife remains drawn and positioned as Glorang Compelled. On his next Action, Glorang can continue Compelling Tordarion (for example, he could make him continue to hold the knife out, or he could force him to move the knife toward

his own throat...). If Glorang stops Compelling Tordarion — for example, if Tordarion (or someone else) Knocks him Out, or he stops paying END to maintain the Compel effect — then Tordarion becomes free to do whatever he wants with his knife.

At the GM's option, if the character using Compel wins the EGO Versus EGO Roll Contest by 3 or more the target cannot "counteract" the compulsion with his next Action. The victim can only counteract that Compel when the conflict ends or he wins a later EGO Roll by 3 or more.

At the GM's option, only characters who have Mind Control (or possibly Psychokinesis) can use Compel.

DEFENSIVE CONCENTRATION, DEFENSIVE EFFORT, DEFENSIVE FOCUS, DEFENSIVE SHIELD, DEFENSIVE STAND

Characters use these five defensive Maneuvers to protect themselves from MTM Combat attacks. A character may Abort to any of them, and may use more than one of them at the same time if he pays the END cost for each one, suffers the penalties (if any) for each one, and takes a Full Phase (no matter how many he uses, or which ones, using two or more automatically requires a Full Phase). If a character uses more than one, he can choose from each one which defensive benefit he wants; they don't all have to provide the same type of benefit. At the GM's option, a character can only use these Maneuvers if he has Mental Defense.

Example: *When he's attacked by a PsiSoldier, Lt. Barrett (who is not himself a mentalist) decides to use some defensive Mental Maneuvers to protect himself. (In his campaign, the GM lets anyone use defensive Mental Maneuvers against any mental attack.) He decides to use Defensive Concentration, Defensive Focus, and Defensive Stand. He chooses to get Mental Defense from all of them (for a total of +7 Mental Defense), though he could have chosen some other mix (such as +6 Mental Defense and +1 DMCV) if he'd preferred. Because he's using more than one this takes a Full Phase Action. He suffers all the penalties and restrictions as well — he has to succeed with an EGO Roll to get the Defensive Focus benefit, and he's DCV 0 and can't move due to using Defensive Stand.*

Defensive Concentration lets a character use a Full Phase to concentrate his efforts on resisting a mental attack. He gains +3 Mental Defense or +1 DMCV as long as he maintains the Maneuver by spending END. He chooses which benefit he gains, and can vary which one he chooses from use to use. But once he chooses which one for a given use he cannot change it until he spends at least one Phase not using Defensive Concentration. For example, if a SPD 4 character activates Defensive Concentration on his Phase in Segment 3 and chooses +3 Mental Defense, he has to keep the +3 Mental Defense until he stops using Defensive Concentration — he can't switch to +1

DMCV on his Phase in Segment 6. To switch to +1 DMCV, he has to spend at least one Phase not using Defensive Concentration, then activate the Maneuver again.

Defensive Effort is just like Defensive Concentration, with two important differences. First, it only takes a Half Phase to use. Second, when using it a character concentrates so hard on protecting himself that he loses his sensory awareness — he can't see, hear, smell, feel, or mentally perceive anything, he's totally "blind."

Defensive Focus lets a character increase his Mental Defense by spending more END — for the standard 1 END per Phase cost of the Maneuver he gets +1 Mental Defense, and for each +1 END per Phase he gets another +1 Mental Defense. (The GM may choose to impose a limit on the amount of Mental Defense a character can obtain this way, such as +10 Mental Defense.) To do this, the character must succeed with an EGO Roll; if the roll fails, he gets no Mental Defense (but since using Defensive Focus is a Zero Phase Action, he doesn't lose any Actions). At the GM's option, the character gets +1 Mental Defense per point his EGO Roll succeeds by; these extra points of Mental Defense do not cost END.

Defensive Shield is similar to Defensive Focus in some ways, but it doesn't require an EGO Roll or extra END cost (beyond the standard 1 END per Phase). Instead, the character's emphasis on protecting himself mentally makes him lose concentration on other things. For every -1 to his CV (not MCV) and all Skill Rolls that he accepts, he gains +2 Mental Defense or +1 DMCV, up to a possible total of +6 Mental Defense or +3 DMCV (meaning -3 to CV and all Skill Rolls). The character can't mix benefits (for example, +4 Mental Defense and +1 DMCV for -3 CV and Skill Rolls); he has to choose one or the other for any given use of Defensive Shield.

Defensive Stand is just like Defensive Concentration in most respects, but a character using it concentrates so much on defending himself mentally that he can't do anything else. He stops moving and is DCV 0 for as long as he maintains the maneuver.

At the GM's option, a character who's aware that he's been affected by a Mental Power and is trying to make a Breakout Roll (for example, a character being Mind Controlled by a villain who lets him remain conscious of what he's doing) can use one of these defensive Mental Maneuvers to improve his Breakout Roll — substitute +1 to the Breakout Roll for +1 DMCV. If the character's not yet aware of the mental attack (such as when he makes his very first Breakout Roll, in most cases) he can't use a defensive Mental Maneuver this way. He also cannot use a defensive Mental Maneuver if the GM rules that the penalty associated with the Mental Maneuver wouldn't hurt or affect him due to the nature of the mental attack.

MENTAL STRIKE

Mental Strike is an offensive Mental Maneuver that lets a character make a direct Mental Blast-like assault on an opponent's mind. To use it, a character must succeed with an MCV Attack Roll. Then he and the target both make EGO Rolls. If the attacker's roll equals or exceeds the target's roll, the target takes 1d6 STUN Only damage for every 10 full points of EGO the attacker has (at the GM's option, a character with 5 or more points of EGO toward the next full 10 does an extra ½d6 of damage). Mental Defense protects against this damage. If the target's roll is higher than the attacker's, he defends himself and takes no damage from the attack.

MIND BAR

Mind Bar is a defensive Mental Maneuver that's roughly the equivalent of the standard *Block* Combat Maneuver — it just uses OMCV versus OMCV, instead of OCV versus OCV, characters can Abort to it, and so on. However, there are a few important differences.

First, a character can only Mind Bar a mental power or attack if he himself has the same power (roughly speaking). In other words, a character has to have Mind Control to Mind Bar another character's Mind Control, Telepathy to Mind Bar another character's Telepathy, and so on. The GM determines whether two powers are sufficiently alike to allow a Mind Bar. If the special effects of the two powers are very different (such as a mental power defined as a pure psionic ability, and one that's a "truth serum" built with Based On CON), the GM generally shouldn't allow a Mind Bar.

At the GM's option, a character can use Mind Bar to "block" any Mental Maneuver, regardless of whether he knows that Maneuver or not. Also at the GM's option, a character who lacks an appropriate mental power to perform a Mind Bar can do so with his EGO, obtaining 1 point of OMCV for every 10 full points of EGO used; this costs END at the rate of 1 END per 5 points of EGO.

Second, the characters' OMCVs are modified by the amount of power they use to Mind Bar. Add +1 to each character's OMCV for every 10 full Active Points of the power used to attack and to Mind Bar (a character doesn't have to use his full power to Mind Bar if he doesn't want to). Thus, it's possible for someone with Mental Illusions 4d6 to Mind Bar someone using Mental Illusions 12d6... just difficult.

Third, a character using Mind Bar must pay the normal END cost for the power he uses. For example, if he uses Mind Control 12d6, he pays 6 END; if he chooses to use only 6d6 of his 12d6, he pays 3 END. This substitutes for the standard 1 END cost most Basic Mental Maneuvers have.

Otherwise, standard rules for Block apply to Mind Bar, with appropriate changes pertaining to Mental Combat (such as substituting MCV for CV). For example, successfully Mind Barring an opponent means a character acts before him if they both have their next Phase in the same Segment (though the GM may limit this effect to mental actions only).

MIND LOCK

A Mind Lock allows a mentalist to temporarily “lock out” another character’s mental power, preventing him from using it.

A character can only Mind Lock a mental power or attack if he himself has the same power (roughly speaking). In other words, a character has to have Mind Control to Mind Lock another character’s Mind Control, Telepathy to Mind Lock another character’s Telepathy, and so on. The GM determines whether two powers are sufficiently alike to allow a Mind Lock. If the special effects of the two powers are very different (such as a mental power defined as a pure psionic ability, and one that’s a “truth serum” built with Based On CON), the GM generally shouldn’t allow a Mind Lock.

To use Mind Lock, a character makes an MCV Attack Roll. If the roll fails, the Lock fails. If the roll succeeds, the attacker and his target both roll 1d6 for each full 5 Active Points in their respective powers and count the “Normal Damage BODY.” If the attacker’s roll equals or exceeds the target’s, the power is Locked; if the target has the higher BODY total, the Lock fails. Both the attacker and his target must pay the normal END cost for the powers they use (which can be used at less than full strength if desired). This substitutes for the standard 1 END cost most Basic Mental Maneuvers have. The character establishing the Lock must continue to pay END every Phase to maintain it (just as if it were a Constant Power). If he runs out of END or can’t pay END for some reason (such as being Stunned or Knocked Out), the Lock stops working.

A Locked power cannot be used at all. As a Zero Phase Action the Locked character may attempt to break the Lock with another “count the Normal Damage BODY” roll contest. He may only try this once per Phase per Locked power, however.

At the GM’s option, a character can attempt to Mind Lock multiple powers at once as a Combined Attack. The character should roll separately to determine if each power is Locked after he succeeds with his MCV Attack Roll. Also at the GM’s option, a character can try to Lock out another character’s ability to use a Mental Maneuver; in this case both characters use their EGO Rolls, instead of rolls based on the Active Points in the powers, to determine if the Lock succeeds.

Advanced Mental Maneuvers

Advanced Mental Maneuvers cost Character Points. Only characters who already have mental powers or who have the GM’s permission to do so can purchase them. In a sense they’re “Mental Martial Arts,” since most of them add to or affect abilities a mentalist already has.

Most Advanced Mental Maneuvers are self-explanatory; they just change the OMCV, DMCV, or damage/effect done with one of a character’s mental abilities. (As noted in the table, some have to be purchased by type of power; for example, a Mental Overwhelm bought to work with Mind Control only works with Mind Control, not with Telepathy or Mental Illusions.)

The *Cerebral Crush* Maneuver lets a character do Normal Damage 2d6 as a mental attack. The target resists this with Mental Defense, and the attack does BODY just like any other Normal Damage attack.

The *Psychic Assault* Maneuver lets a character do Killing Damage ½d6 as a mental attack (he cannot add to this damage, unlike a character using an HKA). The target resists this with Mental Defense, and the attack does BODY just like any other Killing Damage attack. Thus, if the target’s Mental Defense isn’t Resistant, he takes all the BODY damage with no defense.

CEREBRAL FENCING

<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>OMCV</i>	<i>DMCV</i>	<i>Damage/Effects</i>
Mental Lash	4	½	+2	+0	Mental Blast +1d6
Mental Lock	5	1	+1	-2	EGO +10 with Mind Lock
Mental Probe	5	½	+1	+3	Mental Blast
Mindblock	5	½	+0	+1	EGO +10 with Mind Bar

COMMANDO PSIONICS

<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>OMCV</i>	<i>DMCV</i>	<i>Damage/Effects</i>
Cerebral Attack	4	½	+2	+0	Mental Blast +1d6
Ego Crush	4	½	-2	-2	Mental Blast +4d6
Intense Control	4	½	+2	+0	Mind Control +2d6
Improved Mind Bar	5	½	+2	-1	EGO +10 with Mind Bar
Improved Mind Lock	5	1	+1	-2	EGO +10 with Mind Lock
Cerebrohemorrhage	4	½	-2	-2	Killing Damage ½d6

SEISHINJUTSU

<i>Maneuver</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>OMCV</i>	<i>DMCV</i>	<i>Damage/Effects</i>
Irresistible Impulse Lock	4	½	+0	+2	Mind Control +2d6
	5	1	-2	+1	EGO +10 with Mind Lock
Mind Hammer	4	½	+0	+2	Mental Blast +1d6
Mind Probe	5	½	+1	+3	Mental Blast
<i>Seishin no Yō sai</i>	5	½	+0	+1	EGO +10 with Mind Bar

Mental Combat Styles

If you use Advanced Mental Maneuvers in your game, you can let characters purchase them in predefined groupings — just like Martial Arts styles. Here are a few examples for campaigns where the existence of psionics has been established and various organizations use mentalists for their own purposes.

CEREBRAL FENCING

Cerebral Fencing is probably the most “basic” mental fighting style, and the one most commonly known. It’s taught by some military organizations, by megacorporations who employ combat psionics, and similar groups. A few mentalists teach it to other mentalists as a form of “self-defense.”

COMMANDO PSIONICS

This fast, brutal style of mental combat is favored by many military organizations, such as those in “psychic wars” campaigns. It’s designed to help a mentalist defeat his opponent as quickly and efficiently as possible.

SEISHINJUTSU

Said to have been developed by a group of psychic Zen monks in Japan, Seishinjutsu (“psyche combat”) is an “elegant” form of mental combat that stresses discipline and a sophisticated assault over sheer mental force. It’s a difficult style to learn, but trained Seishinjutsuka are extremely powerful. It’s also known as Kokorojutsu (“mind combat”).

SOCIAL COMBAT



Initial Considerations

When deciding which Social Combat rules to use in your campaign (or what sort of rules for Social Combat you want to craft yourself), you should first consider the same sort of fundamental issues that factor into any sort of combat, such as:

COMMUNICATION

Social Combat is only possible when characters can communicate effectively. If that's not possible, methods of attack, defense, taking and healing Social "damage," and all other such considerations are irrelevant.

Typically "communicating" in a Social Combat context means being able to talk clearly and easily to one another. But situations may arise where characters can communicate effectively enough to "attack" one another socially with just gestures or the like. In that case, the GM may reduce the power of the "attacks" to reflect their diminished impact.

Of course, in the social arena, communication may depend on cultural information, body language, and the like. An insult that the target doesn't understand is an insult (or perceive as one) generally isn't going to be an effective social "attack," for example.

GOALS

Since Social Combat can be a broad, vague, intangible sort of thing compared to physical combat, it often helps if all the characters involved state their goals for the interaction when it starts: obtain a certain piece of information; get the girl; make my opponent look like a fool; prevent myself from being made to look like a fool; intimidate my opponent into going away; make this guy angry. That gives the GM a clear idea of what's intended and how the Social Combat may evolve as the characters pursue their respective goals. It may also help him think of clever and creative ways to represent success, failure, and their implications. For example, maybe a character succeeds in intimidating a high-ranking nobleman, but that nobleman then spreads vicious rumors about him to all the rich and powerful people in the kingdom, which will cause the character problems down the line. Or the character fails to impress the girl of his dreams, but his efforts bring him to the attention of someone who's actually much better suited for him.

Most combat in *HERO System* campaigns takes place in the physical arena of guns, fists, swords, energy beams, and like. In some campaigns, mental or magical combat can also take place using certain specialized rules (often adapted from the physical combat rules in some respect).

But there's a fourth type of combat that can occur in almost any genre or setting: *Social Combat*. Social "combat" is a way for characters to interact with one another, and even "fight," without delivering a blow or wielding a weapon. The pen, they say, is mightier than the sword... and in some cases a well-turned phrase or biting comment is even more effective than the written word.

This section of APG2 discusses Social Combat systems for your campaign. After a preliminary discussion of the considerations and implications involved when using Social Combat in your campaign, it provides several possible Social Combat systems. None of them is more "official" than the other, or necessarily "better" — pick the one you like best or that you think will work the most effectively in your campaign, adjust them as needed to fit your setting or your plans for Social Combat, and you're set!

THE BASICS OF SOCIAL COMBAT

A Social Combat system provides a *HERO System* rules framework for character interaction that would otherwise have to be relegated either to a few Skill rolls, or entirely to roleplaying. Both of those approaches have their merits, and you should use them if they work for you. But some gamers prefer a more structured way of determining the outcome of a social encounter, and Social Combat rules provide that.

As always, the GM should use common and dramatic sense when adjudicating the course of a Social Combat and its outcome. Social Combat rules, regardless of the specifics, are designed to enhance game play and make it more fun for everyone, not to provide characters with an easy way to force NPCs to do what they want regardless of logic, common sense, or the demands of the story.



ROLEPLAYING SOCIAL COMBAT

One of the most enjoyable things about Social Combat, regardless of what rules you use for it, is that it's tailor-made for roleplaying. Players can have all kinds of fun trading insults with their enemies, subtly pumping an NPC for information, or trying to persuade someone to do something they want.

A player who roleplays some aspect of Social Combat well should definitely receive some sort of bonus (typically something like

+1 to a Skill Roll, +1d6 on a Presence Attack, or the like). However,

the GM should be wary of penalizing characters who don't roleplay so well. Not everyone is comfortable with in-depth roleplaying or able to think fast enough on his feet to be a good "social duelist." One of the reasons there are Social Combat rules is to allow players who *aren't* socially adept to play characters that are. As long as the player makes *some* effort to participate in roleplaying the encounter and doesn't simply roll dice, penalizing him is usually a bad idea.

ATTACKING

How do you want characters to attack (and defend) in Social Combat? The method you choose tends to influence how players perceive and engage in Social Combat. For example, a system like Skill Social Combat, which relies primarily on Skill rolls, gives the impression of being more "relaxed" and based on characters' skillfulness and manipulateness. On the other hand, the Social Combat Maneuvers system feels more "aggressive" and tends to remind characters of physical confrontation in the way it uses "damage," Social Combat Maneuvers, and the like.

DEFENDING

On the defense side, the primary method of attack tends to dictate the type of defense used. In Skill Social Combat, characters defend themselves "actively" by engaging in Skill Versus Skill Contests. In Social Combat Maneuvers, a system that uses Presence Attacks to cause "Social damage," all characters have Social Defense (SD) as a Characteristic that subtracts from the effect of attacks the way PD reduces Normal Damage; they can also "protect" themselves by buying a high Composure (COM).

Damage Negation and Damage Reduction have no effect in Social Combat.

RESISTING SOCIAL COMBAT

A related issue is how characters resist Social Combat attacks made against them. In meta-game terms, the target of Social Combat isn't going to meekly comply with what his "attacker" wants. At the most basic level, the "attacker" has to succeed with his attack (be that the use of an Interaction Skill, some sort of "Social Combat Maneuver," a Presence Attack, or something else) before he has any chance of getting what he wants. But that's not necessarily the end of the story.

Because Social Combat can directly or indirectly dictate a character's actions, usually to his detriment, most GMs won't allow a character to succeed in using it with just a single Skill Roll or the like. Instead, the target has a chance to resist. Usually this takes typical *HERO System* forms, such as:

- being able to oppose the attacker's Skill Roll through a Skill Versus Skill Contest. In most cases the "resistance roll" is an EGO Roll, but it could be a PRE Roll, a roll with an appropriate Skill, a PER Roll, or the like. The modifiers for Interaction Skills (HSS 37/APG 28) can apply to either roll, as the GM sees fit. For example, if the target of an Interaction Skill roll has a Strong Psychological Complication opposed to the Interaction Skill, the GM could apply the modifier listed on HSS 38/APG 29 as a penalty to the Interaction Skill roll or a bonus to the resistance roll. Modifiers from the Talent *Resistance* and its kin also apply.
- having a Characteristic such as PRE or EGO whose total affects how well the attacker must roll to succeed. (This in turn makes it possible

to buy "extra defense" by buying points of that Characteristic with a Limitation that they only apply to protect against Social Combat.)

Other factors may also affect Social Combat.

For example, in a Star Hero campaign, some alien species may be incapable of lying, and, believing others to be the same, be very gullible (thus granting a bonus to others' Persuasion rolls, or a penalty to their own EGO Rolls to resist).

If a Skill Roll to resist is involved, typically a character only gets to make one roll. However, if the effects of the Skill last for a long time (see below), the GM might allow additional rolls, perhaps at a cumulative penalty similar to that for Breakout Rolls versus Mental Powers.

If the target of Social Combat successfully resists, it means not only that the "attack" failed, but usually that the target realizes the other character was engaging in Social Combat with him (assuming that wasn't obvious already). That could color his reaction to the character, leading to a humiliating incident, a fight, penalties on the character's future attempts to use Social Combat on the target, or the like.

Finally, in some Social Combat situations, such as the use of the *Trading* Skill, the rules specifically note that any person can "resist" them by removing himself from the situation or refusing to interact with his "attacker" any further.

DAMAGE

Depending on the attack/defense method you choose, a Social Combat System may or may not involve some sort of "social damage." In some systems, the loser of a Skill Versus Skill Contest or the victim of a Presence Attack simply suffers the effects described by his attacker, and that's that. This may work perfectly for games with more of a roleplaying emphasis, where the players finding ways to strike a clever social blow or cope with the loss of face are what's important, not precise resolution of actions. On the other hand, the Social Combat Maneuvers system features a new Characteristic, *Composure*, that Social attacks reduce in a manner analogous to physical, energy, or mental attacks reducing STUN. That sort of rule works well for games with a tactical emphasis, where you want to track the gradual loss of a "resource" while still giving the target a chance to fight back in the next Phase.

"HEALING"

The issue of damage dovetails with the question of how characters "heal" from Social Combat damage. Systems involving more or less absolute effects usually rely on similarly "descriptive" methods for healing. The GM rules that based on the strength of the "attack," it's going to take the character minutes, hours, days, or longer to regain his social standing, let the sting of the insult fade, or otherwise "recover" — or the blot on his honor may be so dark and deep that it will never come out (perhaps resulting in the character suffering a long-standing or permanent Negative Reputation or Social Complication).

Conversely, if social damage is closely tracked through some rule like Composure, “healing” may be just as tightly controlled. Characters might have a “Social Recovery” Characteristic, or they might regain a certain amount of lost Composure for every step down the Time Chart that passes (since Time, as they say, heals all wounds).

TIME; ACTIONS

How long does Social Combat take? As noted on 6E2 23, the time for “Speaking (conversation)” (which is more or less the same as most forms of Social Combat) is “Variable.” To keep things moving smoothly, the easiest thing to do is structure Social Combat like other forms of combat: characters can only attack on their Phases. Since the “defense” to Social Combat is usually a Skill Roll or having a high Characteristic, there’s typically no need for the target to Abort to protect himself or the like; the defense in Social Combat is automatic. However, in a Social Combat situation involving some form of “Social Combat Maneuvers,” there may be defensive Maneuvers that characters can Abort to if they want to gain greater protection.

A related issue is what sort of Action a Social Combat “attack” requires. Typically engaging in Social Combat should be considered a Full Phase Action, since characters rarely need to move around much while they’re talking or glaring at one another. The GM can adjust this as he sees fit given the circumstances of the “battle.” For example, a character who’s prepared a lot of insults and barbed questions might be able to make a few Social Combat “attacks” as Half Phase Actions, while the victim has to use Full Phase Actions because he’s been “ambushed” and isn’t as well-prepared.

Implications And Consequences

Because they represent social relationships and methods by which characters interact — intangible things not easily reduced to numbers and rules — Social Combat rules can pose some difficulties in the game. The issues they raise that the GM should consider are discussed below.

AFFECT ON PLAYER CHARACTERS

First, to what extent, if any, can Social Combat affect PCs?

One approach to this is to establish that PCs are *never* affected by Social Combat. Gamers who subscribe to this viewpoint believe the player alone decides how his character reacts to any given situation. Dice rolls and rules should never dictate a PC’s actions unless the rules represent a power, like Mind Control, that can be “forced” on a PC. Aside from that, in the realm of human interactions only the player can determine how his character acts. Thus, PCs can use Social Combat against NPCs, but not against each other, and are immune to its effects unless they choose not to be.

The opposite view is that PCs are just as susceptible to Social Combat as NPCs. Gamers who adopt this approach believe that in the interest of fairness, all characters should be affected the same way. After all, if PCs are able to take advantage of Social Combat to achieve their goals and obtain things they want, they should run the risk of falling victim to having it used against them. Furthermore, unless the GM wants to give persuasive, seductive, or clever NPCs abilities built with Mind Control or Transform, some type of Social Combat (or at the very least the basic use of Interaction Skills) is the only way to represent some characters’ ability to make other people do what they want or see things their way — a common ability in the fiction and movies that inspire RPGs and RPG characters.

Taking the middle ground are rules that allow Social Combat to affect PCs (at least to some degree) but give the PC a chance to resist them somehow (such as a Skill Versus Skill Contest or some sort of defensive Characteristic or power). Typically these rules also apply to NPCs, which sometimes makes it difficult for PCs to use Social Combat on them. *Resisting Social Combat*, above, discusses some possible methods for this.

None of these approaches is necessarily “right” or “wrong” for everyone. It’s a question of how each GM prefers to run his game, how each group prefers to play the *HERO System*, and the needs and demands of a given genre or setting. In some campaigns it may be appropriate, or even desirable, for PCs to suffer the effects of Social Combat, while in others that might be utterly anathema. For most groups, the middle approach — Social Combat can affect PCs, but they have a chance to resist it — works well. The example Social Combat rules later in this section are essentially built on that premise: everyone (including PCs) can engage in Social Combat and be affected by it, but everyone also has some means to withstand or avoid its effects.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL COMBAT

Second, how effective can Social Combat be? To put it another way, how strong an affect can Social Combat have on a character?

In a Skill-based Social Combat system, sometimes (such as certain uses of Animal Handler or High Society) these questions aren’t usually relevant. But for Interaction Skills like Charm, Conversation, Persuasion, and Trading — all of which can direct, to some extent, a character’s actions — they’re important issues. If a Social Combat system can have a strong influence on a character’s behavior, then characters are less inclined to buy Mind Control and similar Powers (particularly if Social Combat is free). On the other hand, if Social Combat isn’t effective enough, characters won’t want to waste any time using it.

The GM has to make this decision based on the nature of his campaign. In a low-powered Heroic game where no character’s ever likely to buy Mind Control anyway, it doesn’t really matter if Social

Combat is highly effective. On the other hand, in a Superheroes or psionics campaign, Mind Control may be common enough that the GM has to scale Social Combat back to the point where it's less effective than Mind Control and powerful Presence Attacks, but still powerful enough to matter.

DURATION OF EFFECT

Third, how long do the effects of Social Combat last? For example, if Kozar the Dark Mage successfully uses Social Combat to sweep the Princess Hallea off her feet, will she always be infatuated with him and/or susceptible to his blandishments, or will she come to her senses sooner or later?

In some cases, the resolution of this issue depends on the circumstances, what the victim has been made to do or believe, or the conduct of the character using Social Combat. When Kozar betrays Princess Hallea, she discovers he was just toying with her affections to get what he wanted. When the mob has time to calm down, its members come to understand they gave in to someone's Oratory-based Social Combat attack.

In other situations, the exact duration of Social Combat's effects may be a crucial factor in the adventure. For example, a thief's con job using Acting and Persuasion has to hold up long enough for him to get away with the loot. In this situation the final determination depends on the GM, but he should consider the following factors:

- Is the character still in the presence of the victim "maintaining" the effects of his Social Combat attack? Usually Social Combat should remain in effect as long as the character takes steps to "maintain" his attacks and nothing occurs to make the victim question things. Sooner or later, though, even the cleverest story or most charming manner tends to wear thin. Conversely, if the character does nothing to "maintain" Social Combat's effects, it's likely the victim will realize he's been tricked or "played" much sooner.
- Have the events of the adventure or the information available to the victim caused him to question the effects of Social Combat? For example, if a character successfully uses Bureaucrats on a low-level bureaucrat, and while doing the task the victim is confronted by his boss, the victim may very well change his mind and stop helping the character.
- If the victim failed to resist Social Combat's effects (in whatever way the Social Combat rules in the campaign allow him to resist, if any), but only by a little, he's more likely to shake off the effects (or at least question them) than someone who fails by a greater degree.
- How "outrageous" was the initial effect? The more the character asks of the victim, the sooner the victim's likely to realize he's being manipulated.

As a good rule of thumb, the GM should establish a Base Time for the effects of Social Combat to last in a given situation (such as 1 Turn, 1 Minute,

1 Hour, or 1 Day). If the character making the Social Combat attack succeeds in a significant way (such as making a Skill Roll by a wide margin, or rolling well above average on a "damage" roll), the GM can add +1 increment (or more, or some fraction thereof). For example, in many cases 1 Hour makes a good Base Time for the duration of Social Combat's effects; in that case, a character who succeeds with a Skill Roll by 2 would cause effects lasting $(1 + 2 =) 3$ hours.

In some cases other *HERO System* rules may dictate or affect the duration of Social Combat effects. For example, if a character Summons a creature and then successfully uses Social Combat to persuade or force it to serve him, it serves him for the number of tasks defined by the *Summon* Power, regardless of what the Social Combat rules say (see 6E1 288-89). In the Talent Social Combat system described below, the attacks are built using Drain and Transform, and thus have a duration of effect based on the rules for those Powers.

Related to the "duration" of Social Combat is the issue of when, if ever, the victim of Social Combat realizes what's happened to him. Sometimes (as with use of the *Interrogation* Skill) this is immediately obvious. In most such cases, once the effects of that sort of Social Combat fade the victim becomes aware he was manipulated (assuming he even cares). But sometimes, as with some uses of Conversation, a character who's fallen prey to Social Combat may never know what was done to him.

Other Factors Affecting Social Combat

When designing a Social Combat system, or considering whether to adopt one of the examples presented below, the GM should also think about these aspects of the *HERO System*:

INTERACTION SKILL MODIFIERS

The Interaction Skill modifiers on HSS 37-38/APG 28-30 could have an effect on Social Combat. In a Skill-based Social Combat system you can apply them as-is. In a system that relies on Presence Attacks or some other mechanic the GM should adapt those rules as appropriate (for example, each +/-1 might be +/-1d6 on a Presence Attack, or +/-3 PRE for determining a character's Presence Attack dice).

COMPLICATIONS

In addition to Negative Reputation (see below), several Complications may interact with Social Combat rules.

ENRAGED/BERSERK

Social Combat attacks may trigger Enrageds such as "Enraged when insulted, taunted, or mocked" or "Enraged when humiliated." In campaigns where Social Combat is a prominent part of play, the frequency of an Enraged/Berserk may increase, thus making it more valuable to characters choosing Complications.

PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLICATION

The Interaction Skill modifiers discussed above cover Psychological Complications, and GMs can use those rules to factor relevant Psychological Complications into Social Combat rules.

SOCIAL COMPLICATION

Social Complications can affect Social Combat in two ways.

First, appropriate Social Complications can be a part of the Social Combat rules (usually in a negative way, since this is, after all, a Complication). Typically an Infrequent one would be a +/-1 or 1d6 modifier, a Frequent one a +/-2 or 2d6 modifier, and a Very Frequent one a +/-3 or 3d6 modifier. The GM might increase the modifier by 1/1d6 for Major or Severe Social Complications, at his discretion.

However, not all Social Complications affect Social Combat — some are relevant, some aren't. For example:

- Social Complications like *Secret Identity* and *Harmful Secret* generally don't affect Social Combat. On the other hand, *Public Identity* or *Famous* might function similarly to Positive Reputation and Negative Reputation, depending on what the character's well-known for, what people think about him, and so forth.
- the Social Complication *Minority* may or may not affect Social Combat. In most cases this Complication primarily indicates that a character's discriminated against and/or has fewer opportunities within society. But in Social Combat, that might work in his favor — for example, if a low-caste character insults a high-caste character, he may get a bonus to the effects of his attack because his presumptuousness is so shocking to society. On the other hand, Social Combat attacks against him might be easier or have a more powerful effect because so many people in society are ready to believe the worst of him. (The same considerations may apply to Social Complications like *Attainder* and *Corruption Of The Blood*, depending on the setting and the specifics.)

Second, some Social Combat attacks might result in a character temporarily acquiring a Social Complication. A character who's been thoroughly humiliated in Social Combat, or who's had a scandalous secret revealed, might suddenly be *Not Received By Polite Society*, or example.

VULNERABILITY

Unless the GM rules otherwise, characters can be Vulnerable to Social Combat. This might represent a natural shyness, a tendency to get flustered in social situations, or the like.

ENDURANCE

Generally, Social Combat attacks and defenses shouldn't cost any END to use. However, the GM can set an END cost for any abilities he thinks are somehow stressful or tiring.

REPUTATION

The *Positive Reputation* Perk (6E1 106) provides bonuses to both Presence Attacks and Interaction Skill rolls in appropriate situations, and thus should factor into Social Combat as well. It should fit into most Social Combat systems without any problems.

The *Negative Reputation* Complication (6E1 424) should also be a part of Social Combat, though of course it hinders a character rather than helps. The text describing it includes an option rule for how it modifies Interaction Skill rolls and Presence Attacks; those rules allow it to fit into most Social Combat systems as easily as Positive Reputation.

STRIKING APPEARANCE

Striking Appearance already has rules for modifying Skill Rolls. Since Striking Appearance is just a limited form of PRE (see 6E1 447), the GM can easily apply it to systems involving PRE or Presence Attacks instead of Skill Rolls: it's +5 PRE for each level of Striking Appearance... but of course, it only applies in situations where the character's appearance could reasonably be a factor.

EXAMPLE SOCIAL COMBAT SYSTEMS

Here are three example Social Combat systems. You can use them as-is, adapt them to your campaign, or simply borrow ideas from them for creating your own system.

Skill Social Combat

Skill Social Combat is a form of Social Combat that relies on Skill Versus Skill Contests with Interaction Skills as its primary mechanic. It assumes PCs are equally susceptible to the effects of Social Combat as NPCs — if they want to engage in Social Combat using these rules, they have to accept the risk of being subjected to Social Combat's negative outcomes themselves.

SKILLS USED

Skill Social Combat relies on the following existing Interaction Skills:

Acting, Bribery, Bureaucratics, High Society, Streetwise: These Interaction Skills usually don't factor into Social Combat, but in specific situations (such as trying to fool someone with an impersonation, deal with a bureaucrat, or negotiate a deal), the GM might allow a character to substitute them for one of the more general Skills mentioned below. (He might even grant a small bonus to the roll if he thinks of them as "specialized" versions of other Interaction Skills for use with a particular group of people, type of conduct, or the like.)

Charm: Used to gain trust, make friends, and for romantic/seductive purposes. The target may or

may not realize that the character's using Charm on him.

Conversation: Used to obtain information from someone without him realizing it.

Interrogation: Used to obtain information from someone when he's aware you're trying to do so. As the name implies, this usually involves a situation where the "attacker" has some level of control over the "target" (who typically would prefer not to reveal the information sought, if he knows it at all).

Oratory: Used to convince large groups of people to think or believe the way you want them to, or to do what you want them to.

Persuasion: Used to convince a single person to think or believe the way you want him to, or to do what you want him to. (Can also be used on small groups, such as a handful of people standing near the character.)

Trading: Used to convince someone to give the character what he wants or "make a deal," particularly in an economic context.

Additionally, the GM should consider incorporating the following new Interaction Skills into the game

Intimidation: Used to compel another character to do something through personality or force of will, rather than actual physical violence.

Manipulation: Used to trick, deceive, fool, con, and otherwise manipulate someone without the target knowing what's happening. (If the GM uses this Skill, he should remove the "telling lies" function from Persuasion. Manipulation becomes the Skill of lying convincingly, though Acting may also serve that purpose in some situations.)

ATTACKING AND DEFENDING

An attack in Skill Social Combat is a Skill Versus Skill Contest. The "attacker" declares what he wants to accomplish and which Skill he wants to use. The GM applies any modifiers (primarily the Interaction Skill Modifiers from HSS 37/APG 28, but others may also factor in).

The target uses one of the following Skills to resist:

- the Skill being used to attack him (this means he knows [or figures out] what his "attacker" is doing and uses his own abilities in that department to avoid the effects or turn the tables; this is common with, among others, Trading)
- some other Skill the GM believes is relevant to the character's ability to perceive and resist the "attack" (for example, if the "attacker" uses Persuasion to try to convince a guard to let him into the building without searching him, the guard's Concealment roll might help him resist because it would give him a chance to realize

the character's smuggling in a weapon, trying to hide something, or the like)

- an INT Roll or Deduction roll (when his ability to figure out what's being done to him is a crucial factor, as with many uses of Charm, Conversation, Manipulation, Oratory, and Persuasion)
- an EGO Roll (when his willpower to resist the attack is a crucial factor, as with Interrogation and some uses of Intimidation)
- a PRE Roll (when his confidence, strength of personality, bravery, and the like are crucial factors, as with Charm, Intimidation, some uses of Persuasion, and the like)

PUSHING

At the GM's option, in appropriate circumstances a character can "Push" his roll to attack or defend in Skill Social Combat, representing the effort of concentrating on what he's doing. For 5 END he gains a +1 to his roll; for 10 END he gains a +2. However, the GM may forbid this, or increase the END cost — most Social Combat situations don't involve any other END expenditures, so it could become too easy for characters to Push frequently and unbalance Social Combat.

Alternately, the GM could "charge" a character something other than END for a Push in Skill Social Combat. For example, perhaps Pushing entails a risk of "extending one's argument too far" or the like, resulting in the loss of ½d6 PRE for a 5-point Push, and 1d6 PRE for a 10-point Push (or some set amount of lost PRE, if preferred).

EFFECTS OF SKILL SOCIAL COMBAT

There are two ways to determine the outcome of a Skill Social Combat "fight."

The first and simplest, though perhaps also the least fun, is the more or less traditional way: the "attacker" declares what he's trying to achieve; the more outrageous his intentions, the bigger the penalty the GM imposes on his Skill Roll in the Skill Versus Skill Contest. If he wins the Contest, the other character has to comply: do what he wants; provide the information he desires; or the like. He may do so willingly (if he doesn't know he's being manipulated in some way) or grudgingly, but he has to comply.

PRESENCE DAMAGE

The second way draws the process out, making it seem more like actual interaction between the two "combatants." In this method, when the "attacker" wins the Skill Versus Skill Contest, the target subtracts the attacker's margin of success from his PRE. If the target wins the Contest and his PRE is below its normal maximum due to previous losses in this "battle," he may add his margin of success back to his PRE. (Alternately, if the two characters are simultaneously "attacking" one another, the target's margin of success reduces the attacker's PRE instead.) This goes on, Contest after Contest, until either (a) the attacker wins, or (b) the attacker stops the attack. Loss or gain of PRE this way affects the target's Presence Attacks

and PRE-based rolls, so that the more he loses the swifter his ultimate defeat tends to arrive.

Example: *Khasdrevan (PRE 25, SPD 4) wants to use Intimidation to convince a Lesser Demon (EGO 20, PRE 25, SPD 4) to obey him. He has Intimidation 16- (he bought it up for just this purpose) and the GM rules that the Demon will use its EGO Roll 13- to resist. Khasdrevan makes the opening "attack" and rolls an 11, making his Intimidation roll by 5. The Demon rolls to resist but only rolls a 12-, making his EGO Roll by 1. That means Khasdrevan wins, and his margin of success is (5 - 1 =) 4, so the Demon loses 4 PRE. That reduces him to PRE 21. This also reduces any of the Demon's PRE-based rolls from 14- to 13-, if he needs to use them against Khasdrevan in this "battle" (the GM rules that in this case the reduction doesn't apply with respect to anyone else, since the Demon still looks plenty evil and frightening to other people).*

In Segment 6, Khasdrevan uses his Action to continue the Intimidation attack. He rolls a 14, succeeding by 2. The Demon rolls an 11, also succeeding by 2. Since that matches Khasdrevan's success, the Demon wins this round. But since his margin of success over Khasdrevan is 0, he doesn't get any PRE back.

In Segment 9, Khasdrevan rolls a 13 again, succeeding by 3. But the Demon rolls an 8, succeeding by 5! He wins, and since his margin of success over Khasdrevan is 2, he regains 2 lost points of PRE (so he's PRE 23).

In Segment 12, Khasdrevan decides he's in danger of losing control and has to go all-out for victory. He Pushes for a +2 to his roll. Then he rolls a 5, succeeding by 13! The Demon rolls a 13 as well, but that's only success by 0 for him, so he loses this round. Even worse, he loses 13 PRE, dropping him to 10. At this point the Demon may decide he'd better go ahead and submit to the wizard's orders, or he may keep fighting...

Whether this reduction applies to Presence Attacks, the use of Interaction Skills, and the like against other persons during the Social Combat "battle" or the duration of its effects is up to the GM. Typically it does apply against anyone who witnesses a character taking PRE damage (and possibly anyone who hears about the "battle," if the PRE reduction lasts long enough).

SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

At the GM's option, characters using the Skills Social Combat rules can buy the Advanced Social Combat Maneuvers described below for the *Social Combat Maneuvers* system. In this case you should ignore the modifiers to OSCV and DSCV, and treat each +1d6 Presence Attack as +1 with the relevant Skill Roll(s). Determining which Social Combat Maneuver applies to which Skill is up to the GM if it's not obvious from the Maneuver's name or description. The GM can also create more Maneuvers if desired, of course.

DURATION

The GM decides how long the effects of a Skill Social Combat last. Depending on the nature of the Social conflict, the lost PRE could return in full as soon as the "battle" ends, could return more slowly (such as 3 PRE per Minute or per Hour), or could return in full after a certain amount of time passes or the character does something to "restore face" (or otherwise counteract the attack's effects). As a default rule, assume the PRE remains lost for 1d6 Hours.

Social Combat Maneuvers

In contrast to Skill Social Combat and Talent Social Combat, which rely on established *HERO System* mechanics and introduce only a few new rules, the *Social Combat Maneuvers* version of Social Combat features a wide variety of new game elements (albeit ones familiar in their general nature and function). This has the effect of giving Social Combat more of a distinct "feel," and conveys to the players the idea that it's a unique form of conflict where they'll succeed... or fail... based on their own merits.

In essence Social Combat Maneuvers analogizes PRE to STR and lets characters use PRE to inflict "damage" in Social Combat. A character who suffers too much damage loses the conflict and has to do what his attacker wants. This system assumes PCs are equally susceptible to the effects of Social Combat as NPCs — if they want to engage in Social Combat using these rules, they have to accept the risk of being subjected to Social Combat's negative outcomes themselves.

CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to making heavy use of PRE, Social Combat Maneuvers relies on several new Characteristics (sometimes referred to as "Social Characteristics"):

Offensive Social Combat Value (OSCV): Offensive Social Combat Value represents a character's "accuracy" in Social Combat — his ability to use just the right phrase at just the right time, think of the most appropriate insult, state his case in the most logical or convincing way, and so forth. OSCV has a Base Value of 3; each additional +1 point of OSCV costs 3 Character Points.

Defensive Social Combat Value (DSCV): Defensive Social Combat Value represents a character's ability to avoid the harmful effects of Social Combat — his skill at adroitly deflecting insults, his resistance to being influenced, intimidated, or persuaded, the devil-may-care attitude that causes social scorn to roll off him without affecting his aplomb one bit. DSCV has a Base Value of 3; each additional +1 point of OSCV costs 3 Character Points.

Social Defense (SD): Social Defense represents a character's ability to withstand the harmful effects of Social Combat when he cannot avoid them. It simulates such attributes as a high degree of

self-confidence, the capacity to compromise pride for the sake of expediency, and simply not caring what other people think about you. SD has a Base Value of 2; each additional +1 point of SD costs 1 Character Point.

Savoir Faire (SF): Also known as *Social Recovery* (SR) by those who prefer more generic terminology, Savoir Faire represents a character's ability to collect himself, regain his composure, and recover from social setbacks. It functions just like REC does for STUN and END, except that it only applies to Composure ("Social STUN," see below). SF has a Base Value of 4; each additional +1 point of SF costs 1 Character Point.

Composure (COM): Also known simply as *Social STUN* (SS), Composure represents a character's strength of personality and will in the face of Social Combat attacks. Those attacks' damage reduce his COM; as his COM falls he suffers various negative effects (see *Damage And Its Effects*, below). COM has a Base Value of 20; each additional +2 points of COM costs 1 Character Point.

SKILLS

The primary Interaction Skills representing basic character interpersonal conduct — Charm, Conversation, Interrogation, Oratory, Persuasion, and Trading — don't exist in the Social Combat Maneuvers system; instead characters use Basic Social Combat Maneuvers (see below) that essentially duplicate their effects. If a character wants to access the "knowledge function" that those Skills provide (such as Trading's capacity for letting a character know or determine values in the marketplace), he can buy an appropriate KS and/or PS.

The more specialized Interaction Skills — Acting, Animal Handler, Bribery, Bureaucratics, High Society, and Streetwise — still exist for both their "interaction" and "knowledge" functions, and are still used in the usual manner. Where there's a possibility that both one of these Skills and Social Combat could be used to accomplish the same sort of "interaction" purpose, the GM decides which one characters have to use. In some cases a character might be allowed to use these Skills as a sort of "Complementary Skill" to a Social Combat Maneuver, granting +1d6 of effect (or perhaps +1 OSCV) for every full 2 points by which the roll succeeds.

If characters want to buy Combat Skill Levels with Social Combat, in most campaigns they should use the costs for CSLs for Mental Powers rather than for standard CSLs. However, this assumes that Social Combat isn't the primary form of conflict between characters and occurs relatively infrequently compared to physical combat.

If that's not the case, then the GM may prefer for characters to use the standard CSL costs instead.

POWERS

Characters can use Adjustment Powers to affect the new Characteristics listed above. However, DSCV, SD, SF, and COM all count as "defensive abilities," and thus Adjustment Powers only have half effect against them (see 6E1 135).

A Desolidified character can be "attacked" and affected in Social Combat, just like he's subject to being attacked with a Presence Attack. (Similarly, he can attack someone in Social Combat without having to buy *Affects Physical World* (+2) for any of his Social Combat Maneuvers.) Of course, attempts to use intimidation or similar social "tactics" against him may suffer serious penalties because he knows he can't be physically touched.

For Transform purposes, consider "Social" a separate sphere like Body, Mind, and Spirit. Social Transforms work against PRE rather than BODY (see APG 57). Unless the GM rules otherwise, any Transform specifically designed to alter a character's PRE and/or Social Characteristics (see above) is a Social Transform.

LIMITATIONS

If a character is using a power with the *Concentration* Limitation while engaged in Social Combat Maneuvers combat, the penalty to his DCV also applies to his DSCV, unless the GM rules otherwise. (The same applies to Inaccurate and its OCV penalty.)

ADVANTAGES

With the GM's permission, a character can use the *Alternate Combat Value* Advantage to build special abilities for use in Social Combat by substituting OSCV and DSCV for other forms of Combat Value. See the accompanying table for suggested Power Modifier values. These values are based on the assumption that the average character's SCV tends to be lower than either his CV or MCV; if that's not the case in your campaign, the GM should adjust the values appropriately.

SOCIAL ALTERNATE COMBAT VALUE

Value	Effect
-¼	Mental Power uses OSCV instead of OMCV
+¼	Mental Power attacks against DSCV instead of DMCV
-¼	Non-Mental Power uses OSCV instead of OCV

+¼ Non-Mental Power attacks against DSCV instead of DCV

FIGHTING

Social Combat Maneuvers combat works just like ordinary physical combat in most respects. Unless the GM rules otherwise, characters can only take Social Combat Maneuver actions on their Phases, and making a Social Combat Maneuver attack requires an Attack Action. Characters can Hold their Actions to make Social attacks, or Abort to use a defensive Social Combat Maneuver.

(Alternately, GMs can assume that all characters have SPD 12 for purposes of Social Combat, since even under the standard *HERO System* rules brief snippets of conversation take no time.)

To determine who acts first in Social Combat Maneuver combat, use characters' INT instead of DEX. The character with the highest INT who has a Phase in a Segment acts first, then the next highest INT, and so forth.

Social Attack Rolls are made the same as ordinary Attack rolls, just using different forms of Combat Value: Attacker's OSCV + 11 - 3d6 roll = DSCV the attacker can hit. If OSCV or DSCV are modified, use the OCV and DCV Checklists on 6E2 36-37 to determine the proper order of operations — just substitute SCV for CV and ignore any steps that are irrelevant to Social Combat (such as weapon and armor modifiers).

SOCIAL COMBAT MODIFIERS

Except where noted below, standard Combat Modifiers don't apply in Social Combat Maneuver fights. (Similarly, unless noted elsewhere, the situations listed in the DCV Modifiers Table on 6E2 37 do not affect DSCV.)

AREA OF EFFECT ATTACK, TARGET AN AREA

The Social Combat Maneuvers rules generally assume that a Social Combat attack is made against a single target: one individual interrogating another; two courtiers exchanging veiled insults during a soiree; a private eye trying to intimidate a thug into coughing up some information; and the like. Only the *Orate* and *Group Social Attack* Social Combat Maneuvers by definition work against groups of people. If a character wants to use some other Social Combat Maneuver against two or more targets at once, he makes the attack as if against an Area (*i.e.*, against DSCV 3), but if appropriate the GM should reduce the amount of Presence Attack dice rolled to reflect the difficulties posed by interacting with a group instead of an individual. For example, typically it's harder to persuade, intimidate, trick, calm, or negotiate with a group than with one person. On the other hand, if all the character wants to do is insult or anger a large number of people, that's easily accomplished and probably suffers no loss of dice.

Alternately, the GM might consider a Social Combat Maneuvers attack against more than one person to work sort of like Spreading An Attack: for each +1 person affected, decrease the attack by -1d6 Presence Attack.

COORDINATED ATTACK

With the GM's permission, characters can Coordinate their Social Combat Maneuvers attacks. This can represent ganging up on the target to bully him into doing something, two or more people more effectively negotiating with an individual, a group of clever thieves pulling off part of a successful con job, or the like. The attackers must succeed with their Teamwork rolls as usual. For those who succeed, and who then hit with their Social Combat attacks, their Presence Attack effect rolls add together for purposes of determining whether the target is Disconcerted.

ENCUMBRANCE

Generally the Encumbrance penalties don't apply to Social Combat Maneuvers attacks. But there may be situations in which a character's so loaded down or overburdened that he can't be as witty or impressive as he ordinarily would be. In that case the GM may wish to apply the Encumbrance penalties to DCV/DEX-based rolls to the character's OSCV. On the other hand, if a character's Social Combat attack involves intimidation, the fact that he can carry a great deal of weight may help him (apply the DCV penalty as a bonus to OSCV).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Most environmental conditions have no effect on Social Combat Maneuvers combat; they don't affect a character's ability to be persuasive, intimidating, clever, impressive, or the like. (Though of course, Social Combat may be inappropriate or impossible in some situations, such as when two characters are falling out of an airplane or are trapped in conditions that prevent communication.) Intoxication is one exception; its penalties to OCV and DCV also apply to OSCV and DSCV.

MULTIPLE ATTACKERS

The GM can adapt the Multiple Attackers rules to Social Combat Maneuvers conflicts much like Coordination: the more characters who "team up" to try to intimidate, persuade, or trick an individual, the harder it is for him to resist/protect himself. The ordinary DCV modifier becomes a DSCV modifier instead.

SURPRISED, SURPRISE MOVE

In most cases these two Combat Modifiers don't apply in Social Combat Maneuvers combat — it's obvious to everyone involved that Social Combat has begun or is taking place. However, situations may arise where the GM thinks it's appropriate to use these Combat Modifiers (substituting OSCV bonuses and DSCV penalties for OCV and DCV modifiers, of course). For example, if a long-time friend turns on a character publicly and begins insulting him, the GM might rule that the target PC is Surprised.

For ease of reference, “Presence Attack” is abbreviated “PA” in these tables.

SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS TABLES

BASIC SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Phase	OSCV	DSCV	Effects
Charm	½	+0	+0	PA to befriend
Converse	1	+0	+0	PA to learn something through conversation
Group Social Attack	1	+0	+0	PA against a group
Insult	½	+0	+0	PA to anger or humiliate someone with an insult
Intimidate	½	+0	+0	PA to force someone to do something
Interrogate	½	+0	+0	PA to convince someone to divulge information
Lie	½	+0	+0	PA to tell a convincing lie
Negotiate	1	+0	+0	PA to negotiate some sort of deal or arrangement
Orate	1	+0	+0	PA to speak convincingly to a group
Persuade	½	+0	+0	PA to persuade someone to do or believe something
Seduce	1	+0	+0	PA to romantically/sexually seduce someone
Sense Lie	1	+0	+0	Make PER Roll to judge whether someone's lying

ADVANCED SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Cost	Phase	OSCV	DSCV	Effects
Biting Sarcasm	4	½	+1	+0	PA + 4d6 to insult or belittle sarcastically, must follow attack
Blatant Threat	5	½	+0	+0	PA + 4d6 to intimidate
Bold Lie	5	½	+1	-1	PA + 4d6 to lie, bluff, or trick someone
Bolster Confidence	5	½	+0	+0	Healing COM +2d6 on another person, usable once (see text)
Clever Repartee	4	½	+1	+1	PA + 2d6 in Social Combat
Cruel Insult	3	½	+1	+1	PA + 2d6 to insult, disrespect, or degrade someone
Cut Direct	5	½	+1	+1	PA +4d6 to insult through lack of acknowledgement, must follow “attack”
Deflecting The Issue	4	½	+2	+2	“Blocks” a Social Combat attack; Abort
Diplomatic Appeal	3	½	+1	+1	PA + 2d6 when appealing to someone's better nature or higher ideals
Fortress Of Arrogance	4	½	—	+5	Protects character from Social Combat attacks; Abort
Harsh Criticism	5	½	-1	+1	PA + 4d6 to criticize, admonish, or correct someone
Push Your Buttons	3	½	+0	+1	PA + 2d6 to anger, enrage, or infuriate someone
Romantic Gesture	3	1	+1	+0	PA + 2d6 to romance or seduce someone
Smart Dealing	3	½	+1	+1	PA + 2d6 when trying to make a deal or seal a bargain
Soothe	3	½	-1	+2	PA + 2d6 to calm someone
Strong Logic	4	½	+0	-1	PA + 4d6 to convince someone you're right or win an argument
Winning Charm	4	½	+1	+1	PA + 2d6 to befriend someone or win his favor
Witty Rejoinder	4	½	+2	+2	PA + 2d6, must follow attack

THE SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

The Social Combat Maneuvers are organized into Basic and Advanced categories. Basic Social Combat Maneuvers are “free” — any character can use them. The Advanced Social Combat Maneuvers cost Character Points; a character can only use one if he's paid for it. Unless the GM rules otherwise, the minimum amount of Character Points a character can spend on Advanced Social Combat Maneuvers is 10 points (just like with regular Martial Arts).

BASIC SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

Charm: This Social Combat Maneuver functions basically the same as the *Charm* Skill (though any functions pertaining to romantic/sexual seduction are covered by the *Seduce* Social Combat Maneuver instead). It allows a character to befriend someone or get on his good side through personal charm and appeal.

Converse: This Social Combat Maneuver functions basically the same as the *Conversation* Skill. It allows a character to engage a target in conversation and elicit useful facts from him without the target realizing what's going on. Alternately the character can use this Social Combat Maneuver simply to be an engaging conversationalist.

Group Social Attack: This Social Combat Maneuver allows a character to make a Social Combat attack against a group of people (see *Area Of Effect Attack, Target An Area*, above).

Insult: This Social Combat Maneuver allows a character to anger or humiliate someone by insulting them. Depending on the nature of the Social Combat, this can range from crude jibes about the target's looks, sexuality, parentage, or other qualities, to the most subtle forms of innuendo.

Intimidate: This Social Combat Maneuver allows a character to bully, harass, or otherwise intimidate the target into doing something the target would ordinarily prefer not to do. There are limits, of course — Intimidate isn't Mind Control — but it's often possible to threaten a victim into doing something he doesn't want to.

Interrogate: This Social Combat Maneuver functions basically the same as the *Interrogation* Skill (though it doesn't allow a character to use physical torture; for that, characters should buy KS: Torture and PS: Torturer). It lets a character convince or force the target to divulge information he'd ordinarily prefer to keep secret.

Lie: This Social Combat Maneuver allows a character to tell a convincing lie. If he successfully reduces the target's COM to 0, the target believes the lie unless and until he perceives or learns something that causes him to question what the character told him.

Negotiate: This Social Combat Maneuver functions basically the same as the *Trading* Skill. It allows a character to negotiate deals or

“arrangements.” This ranges from the classic “dicker over the price of goods in the market” to multibillion dollar boardroom business matters or convincing a guard to let the character pass in exchange for a future favor. In generic terms, Negotiate lets a character persuade someone to give him something in exchange for something in return. The concession doesn't necessarily involve physical goods (Negotiate could involve corresponding uses of political power for mutual benefit, for example), but some “trade” takes place as part of the process.

Orate: This Social Combat Maneuver functions basically the same as the *Oratory* Skill. It allows a character to speak convincingly and well to a group of people, and hopefully win them to his side or influence their behavior.

Persuade: This Social Combat Maneuver functions basically the same as the *Persuasion* Skill. It allows the character to persuade someone to agree with him or do what he wants. (However, it won't let him lie convincingly, which requires the *Lie* Social Combat Maneuver, and the EGO Roll rules described on 6E1 85 are replaced with the standard Social Combat Maneuvers damage rules [see below].)

Seduce: This Social Combat Maneuver functions the same as some aspects of the *Charm* Skill. It allows a character to influence the target to comply with his “romantic” desires, ranging from “Would you like to go out to dinner with me?” to blatant sexual seduction.

Sense Lie: A character who spends a Full Phase and pays careful attention to what someone's saying can judge whether the truth's being told. He makes a PER Roll, and if he succeeds he correctly determines whether he's being lied to. (If the person doing the lying has Acting, the GM can convert this into a Skill Versus Skill Contest instead of just allowing the character to make his PER Roll. Similarly, if the liar uses the *Lie* Maneuver, convert this into a PRE Roll Versus PER Roll Contest.) He can't determine what the truth is, but by carefully evaluating the target can determine if he's speaking false or true.

ADVANCED SOCIAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

The Advanced Social Combat Maneuvers tend to be similar to the Basic Social Combat Maneuvers, but for more specific purposes (such as insulting someone or destroying an opponent's argument with the force of logic). The ones a character buys tend to reflect his personality and style of interacting with people; an unpleasant, arrogant, aggressive person might choose Maneuvers like Biting Sarcasm, Cruel Insult, and Harsh Criticism, whereas a more rational or likeable individual would prefer Clever Repartee, Diplomatic Appeal, and Witty Rejoinder.

Given the nature of Advanced Social Combat Maneuvers, the GM can easily expand the list to include other types of social interaction. The ways in which one human being can communicate with

another, even in a “combative” or “adversarial” fashion, are practically limitless. It’s just a question of assigning a discrete game function to the Maneuver so characters have a reason to purchase it, and of making sure the cost is balanced for the campaign.

Biting Sarcasm: Sarcasm has been aptly described as the lowest form of humor... but it’s undeniably effective in some circumstances. In terms of Social Combat using this Maneuver may be considered something of a “low blow,” particularly against the innocent or unintelligent, but sometimes winning is better than abiding by the rules of conversational chivalry.

A character can only use Biting Sarcasm in response to an opponent’s Social Combat attack. It doesn’t matter whether the attack succeeds or fails (indeed, Sarcasm is often the most Biting against a failed Social attack), but the victim has to have done something to “provoke” the sarcastic response.

Blatant Threat: Sometimes the easiest way to get what you want is a serious threat — be it physical violence, revealing the target’s secret, or something else the target strongly prefers to avoid. Characters use this Social Combat Maneuver to represent the effectiveness of such threats in Social Combat situations. However, the Maneuver grants no special knowledge of the target to the character. Unless he happens to be aware of something non-physical he can threaten the character with (like telling everyone his Secret Identity, kidnapping his wife and kids, or ruining his credit rating), using Blatant Threat generally implies a threat of physical violence... and if the character can’t back that up, he may have a harder time threatening the target (and perhaps other people) in the future.

Bold Lie: When using this Social Combat Maneuver, the character looks the target straight in the eyes and tells him a boldfaced lie, using his air of confidence, competence, and sincerity to trick the target into believing that what he was just told is the truth. If the character succeeds in reducing the target’s COM to 0, the target falls for the lie.

Bolster Confidence: This Social Combat Maneuver isn’t used on a character’s adversaries or even himself, but on friendly “targets.” When an ally or companion is engaged in Social Combat and has lost COM, a character can Bolster Confidence to give him back 2d6 worth of COM. (This is an Attack Action and technically requires a successful Social Attack Roll, which might represent the target’s comprehension of what his “attacker” is trying to do. But the GM can waive the roll in the interest of common and dramatic sense if he prefers.) A character can only use this on a specific person once in any given Social Combat (or at the GM’s option only once during an hour, a day, a week, or the like) — sooner or later the character’s assurances start to ring hollow.

The GM can also limit how many persons a single character can Bolster during specific Social Combat for much the same reasons.

Clever Repartee: You can consider this the “default” Advanced Social Combat Maneuver in some respects. It reflects a character’s ability to say something witty or particularly appropriate at just the right time, regardless of the situation or the nature of the social interaction.

Cruel Insult: A favorite of the strong and powerful, particularly bullies, Cruel Insult allows a character to break the target’s spirit or make him look foolish in front of others through the use of clever, calculated insults. Depending on the situation and the target, this can range from crude jibes about his looks or habits to extremely subtle and witty digs at his sexual habits, ancestry, or table manners.

Characters using Cruel Insult have to beware looking *too* cruel. If they choose the wrong insult for the occasion, or utter it at the wrong time, things may backfire on them. The target could end up looking sympathetic to others instead of stupid or inept, resulting in a gain of COM rather than a loss (or at least no loss). The GM decides whether this is appropriate based on the circumstances, the attacker’s roleplaying, and other factors.

The Cut Direct: This blatant, often cruel, Maneuver involves a failure to acknowledge respect paid, a compliment given, or the like while staring directly at the person offering it — the social equivalent of a slap in the face. (“Cut” in this sense refers to severing social ties with someone.) The typical use follows a bow: the character doesn’t bow in return, he simply stares coldly at the other person. Another common manifestation is to deliberately and blatantly cross a room or a street to avoid encountering or speaking with someone. The accompanying Presence Attack, delivered through expression and body language, is an unvoiced general insult intended to humiliate or degrade.

Deflecting The Issue: Rather than respond to a Social Combat attack in kind, a character can choose to “counterattack” *indirectly*, by changing the topic of conversation or otherwise deflecting the issue down paths less harmful to him. In game terms this works more or less like a Block, but only for Social Combat purposes: a character can Abort to it if necessary; if it succeeds and he and his opponent have their next Phase on the same Segment he automatically gets to act first regardless of relative INT; and so on.

Diplomatic Appeal: This Social Combat Maneuver allows a character to make an appeal to his opponent’s better side — to the spirits of compromise, problem solving, and seeking the best solution for everyone concerned. At the GM’s option, it may be less effective (reduce to +1d6 or even +0d6) if a situation’s already escalated to physical violence or a similar level of conflict.

Fortress Of Arrogance: A character using this Social Combat Maneuver is so *sure* he's right, so *convinced* that his opinion and conduct are correct, that no argument is likely to persuade him. He receives a +5 DSCV bonus that lasts until his next Phase. In game terms this works more or less like a Dodge, but only for Social Combat purposes. Characters can Abort to this Maneuver if necessary.

Harsh Criticism: Another favorite of the powerful, bullies, and petty tyrants everywhere, Harsh Criticism is similar to Cruel Insult, but adds even more dice due to having the weight of logic behind it. The character isn't simply insulting the target, he's criticizing his faults and flaws (which the target is probably already well aware of) in the strongest and most demeaning possible terms. However, as with Cruel Insult, a character using Harsh Criticism has to be careful not to take things too far or he may end up making the situation worse for himself.

Push Your Buttons: A character uses this Social Combat Maneuver to make someone angry. It works best if the character actually knows the target well enough to know what topics or ways of arguing actually do "push his buttons," but it still works without that if the character's clever enough to make intelligent guesses as to the target's "buttons" through observation or knowledge.

If the target has an appropriate Enraged (such as "Enraged when insulted, taunted, or mocked"), he must roll for it whenever he's successfully attacked with Push Your Buttons, even if his COM hasn't reached 0 yet. (The GM may even rule that he automatically becomes Enraged, particularly if he's Disconcerted.) If he's reduced to 0 COM by Push Your Buttons, he automatically becomes Enraged. Furthermore, the GM may rule that any target who's reduced to 0 COM by Push Your Buttons reacts in an Enraged-like fashion even if he doesn't have that Complication.

Romantic Gesture: This Social Combat Maneuver represents a grand romantic gesture of some sort, ranging from bringing flowers and chocolates to composing a romantic poem in the target's honor on the spot. Depending on the circumstances, the gesture may take far longer than a Phase to perform (e.g., a candlelit dinner at a fancy restaurant, a horsedrawn carriage ride around the park).

Smart Dealing: The character's such a skilled talker that he can cut deals and negotiate bargains better than just about anyone.

Soothe: The *Soothe* Maneuver is sort of the opposite of Push Your Buttons: it represents the character's efforts to calm down an angry target, soothe ruffled feathers, or put someone at ease. If the target is currently Enraged/Berserk, and is reduced to 0 COM by Soothe, he automatically recovers from his Enraged/Berserk state. (The GM may also permit him to make recovery rolls after every successful Soothe attack, perhaps

even granting him a bonus to the roll if he's Disconcerted.)

Strong Logic: This Social Combat Maneuver allows a character to present his argument with such compelling, forceful logic that he can convince nearly anyone that he's right, or win nearly any debate.

Winning Charm: Sometimes the easiest way to "win" a Social Combat encounter is for a character to convince the other person that he just wants to be friends or wants to get into that person's good graces. Winning Charm is tailor-made for such encounters. It allows a character to really "turn on the charm" and use the most appealing aspects of his personality to best effect.

Witty Rejoinder: This Social Combat Maneuver is the perfect weapon for socially adept characters who are skilled at verbal jousting. After another character makes a Social Combat attack on a character (whether the attack succeeds or fails), the "target" can use Witty Rejoinder to exploit openings his attacker has given him, make *just* the right response, or the like.

DAMAGE AND ITS EFFECTS

To determine the "damage" done in Social Combat Maneuvers combat, roll a character's Presence Attack dice (including any bonus dice from Advanced Social Combat Maneuvers, or provided by the GM pursuant to the table on 6E2 136). Add up the total on the dice, but don't use the normal Presence Attack mechanics to determine the results. Instead, apply the total as "social damage" to the target. The target subtracts his Social Defense from this amount, and takes the remainder as COM damage.

The attacker should also count the BODY on his roll as if determining Normal Damage BODY. This affects how quickly the victim recovers from his loss (see below).

Example: *Viscomte d'Compeigne is fighting a duel of words with his long-time arch-rival, the Marquis Giscard, at a fashionable salon. He has PRE 18 and uses Cruel Insult. After his attack succeeds, he rolls a 5½d6 Presence Attack, getting a result of 17. The Marquis has SD 5, COM 30. After subtracting his 5 SD from the damage, he loses 12 points of COM and is now at COM 18.*

REDUCTION TO COM 0

If a character is reduced to COM 0 or below, he loses the social battle. If the final attack that reduced him to COM 0 involved an order, instruction, or request (as with most attempts to intimidate, interrogate, negotiate, or charm), the victim has to comply unless the GM or some other rule indicates otherwise. (For example, the rules for Trading, and thus for Negotiate, indicate that a character can always refuse an offered bargain, though the GM may choose to override this if desired.) If the final attack that reduced him to COM 0 didn't involve a "request" the character can comply with (for example, it was an insult or some sort of witty retort), then he's simply disgraced,

humiliated, made to look the fool, loses face, or the like — whatever the GM feels is most appropriate. An NPC will often retreat from the scene, try to escape from his attacker(s), or indicate his defeat and the resulting embarrassment in some other way.

A character may remain at COM 0 for some time after suffering defeat in Social Combat (see below). However, this doesn't mean he instantly complies with any other Social order, instruction, or request. Once he's been reduced to COM 0 and forced to "comply" with what his attacker wants, further Social attacks have little to no effect. They simply disgrace or humiliate him further, cost him more face, or the like. He has to "regain his composure" (*i.e.*, return to positive COM through Recoveries or other means) and try to re-enter the sphere of Social interaction before he's once again subject to Social Combat Maneuvers attacks that can have any further effect.

Since Social Combat is a much broader and more intangible thing than physical combat, in some cases a character may be able to obtain a partial or lesser success before reducing his opponent's COM all the way to 0. The GM determines when this is possible, based on the circumstances and what the character indicates he's trying to accomplish. Some examples include:

- a character starts to Negotiate a major deal, but realizes part of the way through the negotiations (*i.e.*, through the series of Social Combat attacks that represent the dickering) that he probably can't get everything he wants. So he decides to settle for a partial concession (in game terms, he stops after reducing the target's COM to roughly half of what it was at the beginning of the "battle").
- a character begins a conversation with an NPC, hoping to learn several facts. The GM rules that he learns one fact for every 8 points of COM damage he does to the target. After doing 16 points of COM damage he learns a fact that's so important he needs to tell his superior officer right away, so he breaks off the Social Combat.
- a character wants to use Seduce on a beautiful NPC he just met. He decides he doesn't want to try to talk her into bed (which would definitely require reducing her COM to 0), he just wants to convince her to go out on a dinner date with him. The GM rules that she'll agree to go out to him after he reduces her COM to half its starting total.

DISCONCERTED

If the COM damage done to a character (after subtracting defenses) is less than or equal to his Presence (PRE), there's no effect other than the loss of COM. If the COM damage done to a character by a single attack (after subtracting defenses) exceeds his PRE, he's *Disconcerted*. (Some GMs also refer to this simply as being "Socially Stunned.") A character is Disconcerted

by any sufficiently large loss of COM, no matter how he loses it.

A Disconcerted character's DSCV instantly drops to ½. The character remains Disconcerted, and can take no Social Actions, until his next Phase (he cannot even Abort to a defensive Social Action, such as Fortress Of Arrogance). He cannot use Savoir Faire to take Social Recoveries (except his free Post-Segment 12 Recovery). He remains subject to Social Combat attacks.

A Disconcerted character must take a moment to regain his self-confidence and aplomb. This is called *recovering from being Disconcerted*. This works the same as recovering from being Stunned physically, it simply applies only in the Social realm (and is only affected by Social attacks).

RECOVERING LOST COM

A character uses his *Savoir Faire* (SF) Characteristic to determine how quickly he "regains his composure" after suffering a Social attack.

During an ongoing Social Combat Maneuvers "battle," before a character is reduced to COM 0, he uses SF just like a character in physical combat uses REC. He may declare that he's taking a Social Recovery as a Full Phase Action (and that's the only thing he can do that Phase, and his Recovery can be interrupted and spoiled if he takes more COM damage). He gets a Post-Segment 12 Social Recovery as well.

But once a character's reduced to COM 0, the situation changes. At that point he's so humiliated, disgraced, discomfited, embarrassed, or simply "socially damaged" that regaining his former Social state is much harder. The GM should count the "Normal Damage BODY" on the final attack that reduced the character to COM 0 (or, if the GM prefers, take the average "Normal Damage BODY" of all the Social attacks the character was subjected to in this combat). The GM then counts that many steps down the Time Chart beginning with 1 Turn. The character remains at COM 0 for that length of time, and can only begin taking SF Recoveries to regain his lost COM at that point.

Example: *The Viscomte d'Compeigne viciously derides and disgraces his rival the Marquis Giscard, reducing him to COM 0 with a final Cruel Insult attack that does "7 BODY" damage. The GM counts seven steps down the Time Chart beginning with 1 Turn, reaching a final result of 1 Day. The Marquis thus remains at COM 0 for 1 Day; after a day passes since the Viscomte's final attack, he can use his SF to Recover his lost COM as usual.*

APPLICABILITY OF COM REDUCTIONS

Injuries suffered in physical combat are "universal" — if perceptible, they can be perceived by anyone, and they affect the character's ability to withstand further physical combat with anyone (not just the person who injured him).

Not so "Social injuries" represented by loss of COM. As mentioned above, Social Combat Maneuvers conflicts are by definition broader and more intangible than physical combat, and that

SOCIAL PRESENCE ATTACK TABLE

Presence Attack is	Effect of Attack
Target's PRE	Target is Hesitant . The attacker's "blow" has struck home more forcefully than expected, or has caught the target off guard. He hesitates enough so that the attacker (a) may act before him this Phase (if that's appropriate to the situation), (b) may act before him in their next Phase, if they both have their next Phase in the same Segment, or (c) receives +5 PRE only for purposes of resisting the target's Presence Attacks made that Phase (and perhaps for one or more Segments/Phases going forward).
Target's PRE +10	Target is Rattled . The attacker scores a telling "blow." The target is thrown off his game a bit; he may stutter, stammer, or otherwise betray the fact that he's been shaken up. The target hesitates as above, and only performs a Half Phase Action during his next Phase.
Target's PRE +20	Target is Disconcerted . The attacker's "blow" was so well-placed, well-timed, powerful, or audacious that the target is temporarily at a loss for words (in fact, the whole room may have fallen silent, in shock or appreciation). If the Presence Attack involves some request, order, instruction, or command, the target seriously considers complying. The target will not act for 1 Full Phase. The attacker receives +10 PRE only for purposes of resisting the target's Presence Attacks made that Phase (and perhaps for one or more Segments/Phases going forward).
Target's PRE +30	Target is Humiliated . He cannot counterattack his attacker in Social Combat (for at least this Phase, and possibly several Phases [or longer] going forward). If the Presence Attack involves some request, order, instruction, or command, the target must comply. The attacker receives +15 PRE only for purposes of resisting the target's Presence Attacks made that Phase (and perhaps for one or more Segments/Phases going forward).

sometimes works in the loser's favor. Unless the GM rules otherwise, a character's loss of COM applies only to the characters he was engaged in Social Combat with, anyone who witnessed the "battle," and anyone who hears about it (through a report in the media, gossip, or whatever other source). Against other persons, the character's COM remains at full (or at whatever level it has been reduced to by past Social encounters not yet Recovered from).

Example: *Having been humiliated by the Viscomte d'Compeigne at the salon, the Marquis Giscard retreats to the comfort of his gentleman's club, the Cup and Crown. There he's welcomed by several friends who haven't yet heard what happened at the salon, so as far as they're concerned he's still COM 30. If someone else comes to the Cup and Crown and spreads the story of what happened at the salon, Giscard will be disgraced at his club as well and only have COM 0 there, too.*

Keeping track of a character's COM with respect to various groups and persons in a socially complex campaign may require extensive note-taking or bookkeeping. If this interferes with enjoyment of the game, the GM can amend these rules as he sees fit. For example, he might rule that once a character's reduced to COM 0, he's at COM 0 for everyone who "fought" him, witness, or heard about the "battle," and at half his full COM with respect to everyone else.

Talent Social Combat

This form of Social Combat uses special new Talents to represent Social Combat abilities. Characters then engage in combat in the usual *HERO System* manner with the goal of reducing the target's PRE as much as possible. Whenever he thinks the time is ripe, one of the characters in the Social Combat can make a Presence Attack to obtain a lasting result and win the "battle."

The benefit to Talent Social Combat is that characters who want to be really effective in Social Combat *can* be, since few characters (even NPCs) are likely to buy these special Talents. The downside is that the Talents can be quite expensive, making it difficult for the character to excel in other fields as well.

SOCIAL COMBAT TALENTS

The following Talents are commonly purchased by characters who want to be skilled at Social Combat. Anyone can make a Presence Attack, of course, but characters with these Talents know better *when* to make that attack, and *how*, because they're able to weaken their enemies first.

As they're currently built, the attack Talents described below use standard OCV against DCV. If the GM prefers, he can adopt Social Combat Value from the *Social Combat Maneuvers* system and change it to OSCV versus DSCV (a +0 Advantage; see page 87).

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE DEPARTMENT

One of the first Social Combat systems I ever saw for the *HERO System* was the “Repartee” rules created by Jason Vester and published in *Adventurer’s Club #27* (Fall 1995). Like Talent Social Combat, Repartee relies on abilities built with Powers to represent skill at Social Combat, coupled with extensive use of Presence Attacks. The Talent Social Combat system presented here differs from Jason’s,

but it’s only fair to acknowledge the antecedents and inspiration.



ATTAIN

Effect: Major Transform 6d6 (inflict Social Complication), Social Transform, All Or Nothing

Target: One character

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 0

Description: The character reveals a shocking secret of the target’s, or levels an accusation at him that’s so dire, that he permanently stains the target’s honor and harms his social standing.

The exact nature of the Social Complication depends on what the character knows about the target. A really juicy secret works best, but in a pinch he can accuse the target of something shameful that’s difficult to refute. The GM determines the severity and effects of the Social Complication.

This tends to be the “big gun” in Social Combat. Once a character uses Attaint there’s no going back; he and the target are likely to become bitter enemies for life.

Game Information: Major Transform 6d6 (inflict an appropriate Social Complication; heals back in 2d6 months or when target does something that definitively disproves the accusation), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (135 Active Points); All Or Nothing (-½), Limited Target (humans; -½), No Range (-½), Only Works Against Targets In Social Combat (-2), Social Transform (works against PRE not BODY; -½). Total cost: 27 points.

Options:

1) Strong Power: Increase to Major Transform 8d6. 180 Active Points; total cost 36 points.



BOLSTER CONFIDENCE

Effect: Aid PRE 1d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute)

Target: One character

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 0

Description: When a friend or ally is the victim of Clever Repartee, a character with this power can “heal” some of the “damage” by temporarily boosting the victim’s confidence, self-esteem, and social savvy.

Game Information: Aid PRE 1d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (15 Active Points); Only Aid Other (-½), Only Restores To Starting Values (-½), Only Works Against Targets In Social Combat (-2). Total cost: 4 points.

Options:

1) Bolster Confidence II: Increase to Aid PRE 2d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 7 points.

2) Bolster Confidence III: Increase to Aid PRE 3d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

3) Bolster Confidence IV: Increase to Aid PRE 4d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

4) Bolster Confidence V: Increase to Aid PRE 5d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 19 points.

5) Bolster Confidence VI: Increase to Aid PRE 6d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 22 points.



CLEVER REPARTEE

Effect: Drain PRE 1d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute)

Target: One character

Duration: Instant

Range: No Range

END Cost: 0

Description: This is the standard attack in Talent Social Combat. It allows a character to reduce a target’s PRE through whatever sort of repartee seems best suited to the situation: insults; persuasion; personal charm; forceful logic; intimidation; or the like.

Game Information: Drain PRE 1d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (25 Active Points); No Range (-½), Only Works Against Targets In Social Combat (-2). Total cost: 7 points.

Options:

1) Clever Repartee II: Increase to Drain PRE 2d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

2) Clever Repartee III: Increase to Drain PRE 3d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 21 points.

3) Clever Repartee IV: Increase to Drain PRE 4d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 28 points.

4) Clever Repartee V: Increase to Drain PRE 5d6. 125 Active Points; total cost 36 points.

5) Clever Repartee VI: Increase to Drain PRE 6d6. 150 Active Points; total cost 43 points.

MISDIRECTION

Effect:	Reflection versus Social Combat attacks
Target:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0

Description: This Talent adapts the *Reflection* Power for use in Social Combat. It represents a character turning an insult back on his attacker, deflecting an inquiry so that the “attacker” starts paying attention to someone else, and so on.

Game Information: Reflection (27 Active Points' worth) (18 Active Points); Only Works Against Social Combat Attacks (-1). Total cost: 9 points (or 27 Active Points, total cost 14 points if Any Target (+½) is applied).

Options:

1) Misdirection II: Increase to Reflection (51 Active Points):

Only at attacker: 34 Active Points; total cost 17 points.

Any Target (+½): 51 Active Points; total cost 25 points.

2) Misdirection III: Increase to Reflection (75 Active Points):

Only at attacker: 50 Active Points; total cost 25 points.

Any Target (+½): 75 Active Points; total cost 37 points.

3) Misdirection IV: Increase to Reflection (102 Active Points):

Only at attacker: 68 Active Points; total cost 34 points.

Any Target (+½): 102 Active Points; total cost 51 points.

4) Misdirection V: Increase to Reflection (126 Active Points):

Only at attacker: 84 Active Points; total cost 42 points.

Any Target (+½): 126 Active Points; total cost 63 points.

5) Misdirection VI: Increase to Reflection (150 Active Points):

Only at attacker: 100 Active Points; total cost 50 points.

Any Target (+½): 150 Active Points; total cost 75 points.

SCORE A POINT

Effect:	Drain PRE ½d6 + Aid PRE ½d6
Target:	One character/Self
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range/Self
END Cost:	0

Description: The character's so gifted at social interaction and wordplay that he can easily turn the tables on a Social adversary, “scoring a point” that makes his opponent look bad while simultaneously improving his own profile or confidence.

Game Information: Drain PRE ½d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (12 Active Points); No Range (-½), Only Works Against Targets In Social Combat (-2), Unified Power (-¼) (total cost: 3 points) **plus** Aid PRE ½d6 (standard effect: same as Drain roll), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +1), Trigger (when character uses Drain, activating Trigger takes no time, Trigger immediately automatically resets; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (10 Active Points); Linked (-½), Only Aid Self (-1), Only Restores To Starting Values (-½), Unified Power (-¼) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 6 points.

Options:

1) Score A Point II: Increase to Drain PRE 1d6 + Aid PRE 1d6. $25 + 22 = 47$ Active Points; total cost $7 + 7 = 14$ points.

2) Score A Point III: Increase to Drain PRE 1½d6 + Aid PRE 1½d6. $37 + 34 = 71$ Active Points; total cost $10 + 10 = 20$ points.

3) Score A Point IV: Increase to Drain PRE 2d6 + Aid PRE 2d6. $50 + 45 = 95$ Active Points; total cost $14 + 14 = 28$ points.

4) Score A Point V: Increase to Drain PRE 2½d6 + Aid PRE 2½d6. $62 + 56 = 118$ Active Points; total cost $18 + 17 = 35$ points.

5) Score A Point VI: Increase to Drain PRE 3d6 + Aid PRE 3d6. $75 + 67 = 142$ Active Points; total cost $21 + 21 = 42$ points.

SOCIAL CONFIDENCE

Effect:	+5 PRE, Only To Resist Clever Repartee
Target:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0

Description: The character has such strong self-confidence, such a high opinion of himself, or such disdain for the opinions of others that Clever Repartee doesn't affect him as strongly as it does most people.

When someone attacks a character who has Social Confidence with Clever Repartee, the Drained PRE comes out of the Social Confidence PRE first. Only when that's exhausted is the character's regular PRE (which is the basis of his Presence Attacks, Interaction Skill rolls, and the like) affected.

Game Information: +5 PRE (5 Active Points); Only To Resist Clever Repartee (-2). Total cost: 2 points.

Options:

- 1) Social Confidence II:** Increase to +10 PRE. 10 Active Points; total cost 3 points.
- 2) Social Confidence III:** Increase to +15 PRE. 15 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 3) Social Confidence IV:** Increase to +20 PRE. 20 Active Points; total cost 7 points.

UNRUFFLED

Effect:	Power Defense (3 points), Only To Resist Clever Repartee
Target:	Self
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0

Description: Unruffled is similar to Social Confidence. It represents the fact that the character's so sure of himself that attempts to make him look bad in Social Combat situations (*i.e.*, to Drain his PRE with Clever Repartee) roll off him like water off a duck's back.

Game Information: Power Defense (3 points) (3 Active Points); Only To Resist Clever Repartee (-2). Total cost: 1 point.

Options:

- 1) Unruffled II:** Increase to Power Defense (6 points). 6 Active Points; total cost 2 points.
- 2) Unruffled III:** Increase to Power Defense (9 points). 9 Active Points; total cost 3 points.
- 3) Unruffled IV:** Increase to Power Defense (12 points). 12 Active Points; total cost 4 points.
- 4) Unruffled V:** Increase to Power Defense (15 points). 15 Active Points; total cost 5 points.
- 5) Unruffled VI:** Increase to Power Defense (18 points). 18 Active Points; total cost 6 points.

SOCIAL COMBAT ATTACKS

Attacks in Talent Social Combat follow the standard *HERO System* rules: characters attack in DEX order on Phases determined by their SPD; using abilities like Bolster Confidence and Clever Repartee qualifies as an Attack Action; Presence Attacks are Actions that take no time.

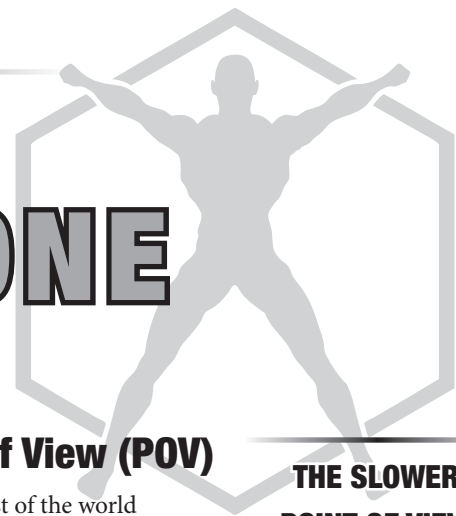
The purpose of Social Combat is to use Clever Repartee over several Phases to reduce an opponent's PRE, thus making him more vulnerable to a Presence Attack as the "final blow" to accomplish the character's end goal (be that to negotiate a good deal, intimidate the target into doing something, persuade him to agree with an opinion, or simply to humiliate him). Over the course of the "battle," the use of Clever Repartee, Bolster Confidence, and other abilities represents the give-and-take of Social Combat as subtle insults, points of logic, and thinly-veiled threats are exchanged in "polite" social situations (or sometimes not-so-polite ones).

Of course, a character doesn't have to wait until his target's PRE is at 0 before making a Presence Attack. He can make one at any time during the "battle." Part of the tactics and strategy of Social Combat is evaluating when it's best to reduce the target's PRE a little more (for a better ultimate result), and when it's best to make a Presence Attack (possibly to make the target hesitate going forward, or in the hopes of winning before the target makes his own Presence Attack).

The Social Presence Attack Table on page 95 indicates the typical results in Talent Social Combat. The standard Presence Attack modifiers from 6E2 136 apply to whatever extent the GM considers appropriate.

The GM determines the duration of effect of a Presence Attack in Talent Social Combat. The rules for "extending the effect" on 6E2 137 should be used. In many cases it may be possible for someone who's been "injured" by a Presence Attack in Talent Social Combat to eliminate or reduce the effects by (a) receiving a Bolster Confidence attack from a friend, or (b) succeeding at some other endeavor that wipes away the "stain" of the "damage" (such as winning a Social Combat against someone else shortly thereafter, or doing something heroic or helpful that gives the lie to whatever insults he suffered).

THE SPEED ZONE



Characters that can move at incredibly fast speeds occur in many genres — the Flash from DC Comics and the Scalosians from the *Star Trek* episode “Wink Of An Eye” are just two examples. Handling such characters using the standard rules can be difficult in a variety of ways. If the GM wants to apply some special rules for such situations, he can let super-fast characters enter the *Speed Zone*.

FAST AND SLOW PERCEPTIONS

When super-speed comes into play, you can divide characters into two types: those who can perceive super-speed phenomena (the Fast POV); and everyone else, who can't (the Slow POV). Normal perception is from the Slow POV; most people can't perceive super-speed effects unaided. In fact, not every “speedster” (a generic term for any character who can move at super-fast speeds, in this context) can necessarily perceive super-speed events. To have the Fast POV, a character needs the ability to perceive at hyper-speeds — *Speed Perception* (see below). (Of course, the GM may let a speedster have the Fast POV, at least at some times, as a side effect of his powers, if that seems appropriate and won't unbalance the game.) There's also a Slower POV for long-term events (see sidebar).

In discussing Slow and Fast POVs, this section also covers two types of events: *Phased events*, actions characters can initiate and which take one second of time (or more); and *Sub-Segment events*, which occur entirely within a single Segment. Sub-Segment events tend to be high-speed/super-speed events, and often they occur too fast for PCs (except, of course, some speedsters) to interfere with.

The Slow Point Of View (POV)

The Slow POV is how most of the world perceives events — it's the point of view of the “average observer.” People move at similar speeds in the real world, although certain “high speed” objects (jets, bullets, and the like) may move much faster. Speedsters enter the equation as characters who can move just as fast as, if not faster than, the “high speed” objects. The faster a speedster (or object) moves, the less of his actions remain visible to the Slow POV. In short, a Slow POV viewer usually sees the results of a super-speed event rather than the event itself.

Imagine two automobiles horribly mismatched in speed. A Yugo travels down the highway at 10 mph, racing a Jaguar traveling over 100 mph. The Yugo driver perceives the Jaguar in his rear-view mirror for a very short period of time, they are neck and neck for the briefest of instants as they meet, and the Jaguar rapidly disappears from the Yugo driver's slow view. The faster the Jaguar, the less time the Yugo driver can perceive it, let alone interfere with it in some way. The Jaguar driver perceives the Yugo first as an obstacle in the distance, briefly as a peer, and then the Yugo rapidly shrinks in the distance behind him.

Character-initiated Actions are Phased events and take roughly one Segment — one second of real time — to occur (if not more). Phased events are completely visible to the Slow POV unless they're purchased with Invisible Power Effects or some other game mechanic “conceals” them.

Many events in the real world are Sub-Segment — they take place entirely within a single second of real time. Examples include fan blades rotating, bullets firing, explosions detonating, balloons popping, and the entire life-span of certain subatomic particles. These events occur so swiftly a Slow POV observer cannot perceive them, making them effectively invisible. If a Sub-Segment event has no perceivable interaction with the surrounding environment, then the Slow POV might not even be aware it took place at all. For example, certain subatomic particles are created, live, and die all without the average person knowing about it.

THE SLOWER POINT OF VIEW

Another point of view easily overlooked when considering speedsters and hypervelocity is the *Slower POV*, or how the world looks from the perspective of long-term events such as flowers blooming, trees growing, paper discoloring in the sun, and radioactive material decaying. To the Slower POV most of the world blinks past as if at super-speed. In a speedy world, this would seem to be a real hindrance.

Sometimes, however, events or movement can escape detection because they're moving or happening so slowly that there's little perceptible difference from one moment to the next. Time-lapsed photography would capture these tiny differences, and speed them up upon viewing so the differences could be seen in real time, but they might easily escape the notice of ordinary characters, much less speedsters — and thus perhaps not be detectable until they're dangerous....



SUB-SEGMENT EVENTS

Sub-Segment Event	What The Slow POV Sees (The “Effect”)
Balloon/Bubble Popping	Instantaneous change from an inflated sphere to deflated rubber, leftover fragments of rubber, the audible “pop”
Bullet	A localized impact, inflicting concentrated injury/damage
Electricity, Lights	A continuous level of ambient light
Explosion	A wide-area impact, inflicting wide-spread damage, accompanied by flame and noise
Computer Calculations	Input data transforms into a resulting output piece of data
Rotating Fan/Propeller	A disturbance in and movement of air or water, the blur of the fanblades moving
Television, Movie Screen	A continuous moving and talking picture

More familiar Sub-Segment events affect the environment, allowing a person with the Slow POV to perceive the effect, if not the event itself. For instance, a gunshot appears as an injury (or damage) inflicted on the target even though the bullet in flight is invisible to most people. Each high-speed event listed in the Sub-Segment Events table generates certain observable Slow POV effects. In some cases the source of the effect is completely invisible, in some cases it's simply a blur, and in a few cases it's obvious (*i.e.*, a bullet comes from a gun that makes a loud bang when fired).

Speedsters can generate most Sub-Segment effects by emulating the design or nature of a real-world event in some way, but raw speed alone may not be enough. For example, fans move air with specially angled blades, and bullets are crafted to maximize muzzle velocity and impact. To emulate a fan, a speedster needs a similarly-shaped object, or the ability to shape his hand to mimic a fanblade; to emulate a bullet, he needs an object of similar size and shape to throw at hypervelocity.

REAL-WORLD SPEEDS

Speed is relative. You can tell how a speedster compares to non-speedsters by looking at the Speed Chart, his meters of movement, and his speedster abilities, but how do speedsters compare with common high-speed events in the real world? Some of these real-world events are measured by linear movement, while some are complete events which begin and end within a very short time interval. The Real-World Event Speeds, One-Second Events, and “Few Second” Events tables list (a) some real-world occurrences (starting with very short interval Sub-Segment events and progressing into the Phased (1 Segment) realm), (b) some events that can happen in 1 second, and (c) some short-term multi-second events

SPEEDSTER REACTION TIME

Nerve impulses are the physiological basis for action and reaction. Sensory input is transmitted to the brain by nerve impulses, and action orders from the brain to muscles are likewise carried by nerve impulses. In a normal 2m tall person it takes about 0.02 seconds for a nerve impulse to travel from toe to head. In theory, at least, speedsters whose powers involve moving or reacting at hypervelocity have much faster nerve impulses. In part things like high DEX and SPD, Lightning Reflexes, and various speedster abilities represent this.

Since DEX determines who (or what) acts first in a Phase, the question arises: how fast does a speedster have to be — in other words, how high does his DEX (possibly augmented by Lightning Reflexes) have to be — to beat or interrupt certain real-world events like the ones listed in the accompanying tables? (Of course, “being so fast I can interrupt Sub-Segment events” could be the special effect of many speedster abilities, regardless of DEX; this discussion is more theoretical.)

The *HERO System* rules for determining who acts first in a Phase — the DEX order — in effect already divide single seconds into smaller time intervals for game purposes. Assuming, for the sake of discussion, that the maximum DEX possible for characters is 100, the rules effectively divide each Segment into 100 intervals, each 1/100 second long. Only a speedster with DEX 100 (again, possibly augmented further by Lightning Reflexes or the like) could hope to beat or interrupt any Sub-Segment event occurring during that Segment. As the 1/100 second intervals tick by, slower speedsters, and eventually characters with sub-speedster reaction times, get their Actions in turn.

“FEW SECOND” EVENTS

Second Interval	Real World Event
1.25 seconds	Light travels from the Moon to the Earth
1.5-2 seconds	Earth-boring machine bores a hole one inch in diameter, 3 feet deep
2.5 seconds	An echo leaves the surface and returns from deepest known part of ocean 10,912m (35,800 feet)
5 seconds	Safe speed for each person to pass through a revolving door
5 seconds	The sound of thunder travels 1 mile (1.6 km)
6 seconds	Most tents catch fire after exposure to flame
6 seconds	A parachutist's static line parachute opens
6 seconds	Absorb a pint of oxygen through lungs while running

The accompanying tables, which tell you how fast various phenomena and events are, tell you how precisely you have to subdivide a Segment, and thus what their “DEX” is for purposes of when they would “act” during a “Phase.” To match the speed of lightning (.001-.01 second), a speedster would need a DEX value of 100-1000. To out-race dynamite exploding (.00001-.001 second), a speedster would need a DEX value just above 1000-100,000. To move faster than a computer could calculate, a speedster's DEX value would have to exceed 1 million.

Obviously no speedster cannot afford such astronomical amounts of DEX. The character Point cost prohibits buying enough SPD, DEX, and Movement to match the muzzle velocity of a gun to enable the speedster to literally out-race bullets, or to grab a bomb as it's exploding and carry it safely away. Yet in the comics and movies speedsters routinely race against lightning bolts, dodge explosions, and even out-run sound and light. To simulate these classic speedster abilities, you have to buy speedster powers like the ones in the *Speedster Powers* section of *Champions Powers* and define the special effect as “I can outrace lightning!” (or whatever it is the character wants to do).

REAL WORLD EVENT SPEEDS

Sub-Segment Interval	Real World Event
0.0000000001 second (10^{-10})	Life of subatomic particles
0.0000000066 second (10^{-9})	Light travels 2m
0.00000001 second (10^{-8})	High speed computer processing
0.0000001 second (10^{-7})	Minimum time for light to impress a photographic plate; minimum time for a “continuous” recording camera to record a single frame
0.000001 second (10^{-6})	Typical computer internal processing
0.00001 second (10^{-5})	Dynamite exploding
0.0001 second (10^{-4})	Human voice sampling (digital communications), high speed bullets
0.0058 second (10^{-3})	Sound propagating 2m
0.001 second (10^{-3})	Lightning striking, bullets, balloons popping, supersonic realm
0.01 second (10^{-2})	Human reflexes, some nerve impulses, and some perception
0.02 seconds (10^{-2})	Human nerve impulses
0.1 second (10^{-1})	Human ears hear a distinct echo sound
0.4 second (10^{-1})	Baton twirl
0.25 second (10^{-1})	Human eye reception of stationary visual image
0.1-1 second (10^{-1})	Human perception

FIREARM MUZZLE VELOCITY

Gun/Ammo	Feet/ Second	Meters/ Second	Meters per Turn
.38 special	810	247	2,952
.45 Colt revolver	860	262	3,144
12 gauge shot	1,125	343	4,104
.22 long rifle	1,150	350	4,200
.357 Magnum	1,450	442	5,304
.44 Magnum	1,470	448	5,376
7.62mm NATO	2,700	823	9,864
Flechette	4,850	1,478	17,736

SPEED ZONE LEVELS

- One Second Zone
- Millispeed Zone
- Microspeed Zone
- Nanospeed Zone
- Picospeed Zone
- Femtospeed Zone
- Attospeed Zone

The levels are in order from longest to shortest time interval. As noted in the main text, each “level” down divides by 1,000 — in other words, each level represents events a thousand times faster than the level above, and contains a slice of time only 1/1000 as long as the level above.

The Fast Point of View (POV) And The Speed Zone

The Fast Point of View is what observers who have the *Speed Perception* ability (see the accompanying text box) can perceive. (In some cases, the special effects of other abilities may involve a character “having” what amounts to Speed Perception for a specific purpose.) Ordinarily the GM only has to describe events for the Slow POV, but once a speedster or other character with Speed Perception enters the game, he may have to take the Fast POV into account. Instead of just saying “Vector vanishes” (which is what most observers perceive), he has to tell the speedster, “Vector flew behind those clouds over there at hypervelocity.”

When a speedster enters the *Speed Zone* — the realm of the Sub-Segment — he moves and acts mostly unimpeded, although he’s visible to the Fast POV, and of course his actions leave traces in the physical world. It’s a classic scene: a speedster villain “walks” into a bank lobby populated with bodies frozen in time. He wanders around taking as much money as he can carry, humiliates the security guard by unbuckling his pants, kisses the attractive teller, and leaves a calling card before walking out. A split-second later, people with the Slow POV perceive the end results of his actions: the calling card suddenly appears, the money just as suddenly disappears, the security guard’s pants fall down, and the teller feels something brush against her lips. Later on, a sufficiently fast security camera shows the police what really happened from the Fast POV — the speedster moved in at such speed that everything around him *seemed* to be “frozen in time,” did whatever he wanted to do, and then left... all in the space of a microsecond.

SPEED PERCEPTION

Effect: Rapid for Sight Group
Target: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
END Cost: 0

Description: Speed Perception is the ability to see events that happen at ultra-fast speeds — from the spinning of fanblades to the motion of bullets, and perhaps beyond even to the motion of lightwaves or atomic particles. In other words, it’s the main way characters obtain the “Fast Point of View” discussed in the main text. It involves applying the *Rapid Sense Modifier* to a character’s Sight Group (though a speedster could easily buy it for other Senses, if desired).

Speed Perception works by, in effect, “slowing down” fast events so the character can see them as if they occurred over an entire second. For example, if a character has 15 points’ worth of Speed Perception — Millispeed Perception — he can see events that occur in one-thousandth of a second as if they were occurring over the space of a second. Unlike most Enhanced Senses,

characters frequently turn it off; it’s frustrating for things to always seem to move so slowly.

The list below describes different levels of Speed Perception based on the “levels” of the Speed Zone. The character buys whatever amount of Speed Perception he desires. See the main text for further rules regarding Perception and high velocity phenomena.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 15 **Millispeed Perception:** Rapid (x1,000) for Sight Group: Events in the normal-speed world are slowed down to the point where they can be perceived as if they took an entire second. Slower events seem to be standing still, or nearly so. At this level most speedster tricks can be perceived as they occur, though some of the more powerful ones may seem to be moving very quickly.
- 30 **Microspeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 million) for Sight Group: Events in the Milli-Perception Zone are slowed down to the point where they can be perceived as if they took an entire second. Slower events seem to be standing still, or nearly so. At this level virtually all “speedster tricks” can be perceived as they occur.
- 45 **Nanospeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 billion) for Sight Group: Rapid (x1 billion) for Sight Group. Events in the Micro-Perception Zone are slowed down to the point where they can be perceived as if they took an entire second. Slower events seem to be standing still, or nearly so.
- 60 **Picospeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 trillion) for Sight Group: Rapid (x1 trillion) for Sight Group. Events in the Nano-Perception Zone are slowed down to the point where they can be perceived as if they took an entire second. Slower events seem to be standing still, or nearly so.
- 75 **Femtosped Perception:** Rapid (x1 quadrillion) for Sight Group: Rapid (x1 quadrillion) for Sight Group. Events in the Pico-Perception Zone are slowed down to the point where they can be perceived as if they took an entire second. Slower events seem to be standing still, or nearly so.
- 90 **Attospeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 quintillion) for Sight Group: Rapid (x1 quintillion) for Sight Group. Events in the Femto-Perception Zone are slowed down to the point where they can be perceived as if they took an entire second. Slower events seem to be standing still, or nearly so.

Options:

1) Normal Sight Only: Instead of buying Rapid for his entire Sight Group, the character buys it only for his Normal Sight:

Cost Power

- 9 **Millispeed Perception:** Rapid (x1,000) for Normal Sight
- 18 **Microspeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 million) for Normal Sight
- 27 **Nanospeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 billion) for Normal Sight
- 36 **Picospeed Perception:** Rapid (x1 trillion) for Normal Sight
- 45 **Femtosped Perception:** Rapid (x1 quadrillion) for Normal Sight
- 54 **Attosped Perception:** Rapid (x1 quintillion) for Normal Sight

PERCEIVING THE SPEED ZONE

Using Speed Perception (which is built with the *Rapid* Sense Modifier) to perceive the Speed Zone (the Sub-Segment realm) is analogous to a character using a Microscopic Sense to perceive the Microverse (the world of the very tiny). Both forms of Enhanced Perception allow a character to perceive into a “dimension” he may (or may not) be able to affect, but whose actions and events he can observe thanks to that ability. For example, depending on how efficient his Speed Perception is and how observant he happens to be, a character with Speed Perception could see:

- Rotating fan blades clearly defined as they spin
- Bullets moving through the air
- Balloons visibly change from inflated to deflated as they pop
- Explosions appear as growing balls of fire
- “Invisible” or constant motion effects appear discrete (e.g., he could see individual movie frames)

In other words, Speed Perception permits a character to perceive high-speed events play out before him and comprehend them, provided the events would normally be visible/audible to him if they were slowed down to “normal speed.” For example, a bullet would be visible — if it were slowed down, it’s certainly large enough for anyone to see — but a stream of computer data would not be (unless the character also had the ability to “see” magnetic impulses and very tiny objects).

Described below are eight “levels” of the Speed Zone, representing increasingly smaller portions of a second (the smallest interval perceivable and actionable by most humans unaided), and thus increasingly faster actions and events. Each “level” down divides by 1,000 — in other words, each level represents events a thousand times faster than the level above, and contains a slice of time only 1/1000 as long as the level above. A character using Speed Perception can see objects and people moving at these velocities, or during these slices of time, as if they were stationary relative to him (or moving so slowly that he can perceive them, if not stationary). In some cases the special effects of speedster tricks may dictate that a character

ONE-SECOND EVENTS

In 1 second (1 Segment),

- Light travels 186,282 miles in air, or 124,000 miles through glass
- Sound travels approximately 660-760 miles (depends on the medium propagated through)
- A telephone signal travels 100,000 miles through a wire
- A meteor in space travels 40 kilometers
- A lightning leader bolt travels 290 miles toward the ground
- Earth travels 18.5 miles in solar orbit
- The primary shock waves of an earthquake travel 5 miles
- A .22-caliber rifle bullet travels approximately 366 meters (1,200 feet) (see the Firearm Muzzle Velocity table)
- A cheetah, the fastest mammal with a top speed of approximately 70 miles per hour, sprints 31 meters (or 100 feet)
- A race horse covers 15-19 meters on a flat track
- Flames spread 10 meters from the center of an explosion
- A household light bulb (60 Hz) turns on and off 60 times, giving the sensation of constantly being on
- A human eye sees 24 frames of film at the movies*

*: The human eye requires 0.25 seconds to receive a single stationary image and relay that information to the brain. Faster than that and stationary images blur together into perceived continuous motion. It takes 24 images or more per second to reliably fool the human eye into perceiving multiple images as motion. A character moving faster than that, i.e., 26m per Segment, appears as a blur, assuming he maintains the same velocity within the observer’s entire field of vision.

3

can, for a Segment at least, “speed perceive” into a given “level” of the Speed Zone.

THE ONE SECOND (SEGMENTED) ZONE

Within a single second (1 Segment), here’s what both Slow POV and Fast POV can perceive:

- A speeding car (90 mph) travels about 40 meters
- A human body falling at terminal velocity (60m/Segment) travels about 60 meters
- A character can make a Combat Move with full perception and normal OCV and DCV, or a Noncombat Move at 0 OCV, ½ DCV
- A bullet fired by a .38 Special revolver traveling about 810 feet per second goes about 248m
- A bullet fired by a .44 Magnum traveling about 1,470 feet per second goes about 448m
- A complete lightning stroke from sky to ground, with multiple return strokes
- A grenade explodes instantly
- Complex computer systems switch between multitasking software processes several times
- Hundreds, thousands, and even millions of radio and TV waves travels past a specific point

THE MILLI-PERCEPTION ZONE

Within a single millisecond ($1/1000$ or 10^{-3} of a second), here's what the Fast POV can still see and hear:

- A speeding car (90 mph) travels about 0.04 meters (4 centimeters)
- A falling human body falls about 0.06 meters (6 centimeters)
- Characters in the normal-speed world are at DCV 0, and cannot make attacks, because this interval of time is too fast for them to react (it's as if they're standing still; see *Entering The Speed Zone*, below)
- A .38 bullet goes about 0.2 meters (20 centimeters)
- A .44 bullet goes about 0.4 meters (40 centimeters)
- Lightning appears to be standing still
- A grenade explodes slowly and visibly
- Bursting balloons and explosions have slowed down significantly (if not completely)
- Computer systems spend this time within a single software process
- A digitizer has sampled a human voice 8 times
- Electric lights (incandescent and fluorescent) gradually flicker brighter and dimmer
- Water waves appear to be frozen
- There is complete silence, since this interval is faster than the speed of sound

THE MICRO-PERCEPTION ZONE

Within a single microsecond ($1/1,000,000$ or one-millionth (10^{-6}) of a second), here's what the Fast POV can still see and hear:

- Cars and falling bodies appear to stand still
- Characters in the normal-speed world are at DCV 0 (see above)
- Both .38 and .44 bullets are barely crawling along, appearing to hang in mid-air
- Bursting balloons, explosions, and lightning appear frozen in time
- Typical computers execute several machine instructions, high speed computers are still chugging along at the process level
- Long-wave radio has stopped; one to ten AM radio waves move past a specific point
- Observers can still see, since it's not near the speed of light (300,000,000 meters per second) yet, although there may be some visual distortions, since light can only travel 300 meters in this tiny interval

THE NANO-PERCEPTION ZONE

Within a single nano-second ($1/1,000,000,000$ or one-billionth (10^{-9}) of a second), here's what the Fast POV can still see and hear:

- Most physical movement (vehicles, bodies, bullets, explosions) appears to stand still; everyone is at OCV and DCV 0 (see above)
- Typical computers have appeared to stop; higher speed computers are executing single machine instructions
- Observers start to see color distortion, since visible light hasn't traveled very far (0.3 meters) in this very short time interval, and frequencies of light are in this realm. This level also approaches the speed of all electromagnetic energy, such as electricity, magnetism, radio waves, and X-rays.
- AM, FM, and television broadcasts have stopped, and between one and 1,000 short-wave radio waves move past a specific point
- Anything traveling further than 0.3 meters during this time interval would be moving faster than the speed of light

THE PICO-PERCEPTION ZONE

Within a single pico-second ($1/1,000,000,000,000$ or one-trillionth (10^{-12}) of a second), here's what the Fast POV can still perceive:

- The distance that light travels is much shorter (0.3 millimeters)
- Super-computers have appeared to stop; espionage- or military-level code-breaking computers are still running
- This is the limit of reliable recording speed on magnetic media — any faster and the resulting data becomes random
- All radio has stopped, and an observer can start to see discrete infrared and visible light waves

THE FEMTO-PERCEPTION ZONE

Within a single femto-second ($1/1,000,000,000,000,000$ or one-quadrillionth (10^{-15}) of a second), here's what the Fast POV can still perceive:

- All infrared and visible light wave movement has stopped, and characters start to see discrete ultraviolet and X-rays
- Espionage- or military-level code-breaking computers are executing single machine instructions, requiring specially-manufactured "processor-in-memory" chips

THE ATTO-PERCEPTION ZONE

Within a single atto-second (1/1,000,000,000,000,000,000 or one-quintillionth (10^{-18}) of a second), here's what the Fast POV can still perceive:

- All ultraviolet light and x-rays have stopped, and an observer can start to see discrete gamma rays

BEYOND THE ATTO-PERCEPTION ZONE

In one-septillionth (10^{-24}) of a second, light can travel across a proton. Within this interval, sub-atomic particles still move at high speeds. Unstable particles within an atomic nucleus can be created and destroyed. The lifespan of a hadron, the sub-atomic particle that holds the nucleus together, can be measured in this interval. Quantum computer prototypes are still very much active.

Unless the campaign accepts FTL movement, the bodies which can still move during time intervals shorter than 10^{-24} second must be so small, and move over such a tiny distance, as to be beyond the scope of the campaign.

SPEED ZONE EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT COST TABLE

Cost Effect

- 22 **Enter The Speed Zone, Basic Power:** The character can enter the Speed Zone. Subjectively, he "remains" there for an Extra Phase, giving him one Phase's worth of Actions he can take
- 52 **Enter The Speed Zone (1 Turn):** As above, but subjectively the character can "remain" in the Speed Zone for 1 Turn, giving him nearly an entire Turn's worth of Actions he can take
- 82 **Enter The Speed Zone (1 Minute):** As above, but subjectively the character can "remain" in the Speed Zone for 1 Minute, giving him several Turns' worth of Actions he can take
- 112 **Enter The Speed Zone (5 Minutes):** As above, but subjectively the character can "remain" in the Speed Zone for several minutes
- 142 **Enter The Speed Zone (20 Minutes):** As above, but subjectively the character can "remain" in the Speed Zone for almost half an hour
- 172 **Enter The Speed Zone (1 Hour):** As above, but subjectively the character can "remain" in the Speed Zone for an hour
- ...and so on (+30 Character Points per step down the Time Chart)

Cost Level Modifiers

- +0 **Millispeed Level:** The character can enter the "millispeed" level of the Zone. He has SPD 2 while in the Speed Zone.
- +2 **Microspeed Level:** The character can enter the "microspeed" level of the Zone, making him faster than characters at the Millispeed Level. He has SPD 4 while in the Speed Zone.
- +4 **Nanospeed Level:** The character can enter the "nanospeed" level of the Zone, making him faster than characters at the Microspeed Level and "above." He has SPD 6 while in the Speed Zone.
- +6 **Picospeed Level:** The character can enter the "picospeed" level of the Zone, making him faster than characters at the Nanospeed Level and "above." He has SPD 8 while in the Speed Zone.
- +8 **Femtospeed Level:** The character can enter the "femtospeed" level of the Zone, making him faster than characters at the Picospeed Level and "above." He has SPD 10 while in the Speed Zone.
- +10 **Attospeed Level:** The character can enter the "attospeed" level of the Zone, making him faster than characters at the Femtospeed Level and "above." He has SPD 12 while in the Speed Zone.

Cost Advantages

- +¼ **Quick Entrance:** using Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement only takes a Half Phase Action
- +½ **Quick Entrance:** using Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement only takes a Zero Phase Action



ENTERING THE SPEED ZONE

Perceiving the world as slowed down to a virtual standstill is one thing. It's a fun ability and can explain a lot of other abilities, but it doesn't allow a character to have any actual effect on combat or the world around him. Actually *getting the world to slow down* is quite another, since that can significantly unbalance a game. The character who can move so fast, or so disrupt the flow of time, that other characters have no chance to act or react to him is effectively unstoppable... unless carefully handled by the GM.

Moving so quickly that other people are "frozen in place" is referred to as entering the *Speed Zone*. Other common terms for it are going into "Fast Time" or "Bullet Time," but whatever you call it, the effect is the same: the character can move and act between the ticks of the clock, while slower characters are unable to do anything.

Buying Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement

Since the Speed Zone effectively represents another state of reality, the power used to simulate the ability to enter it is Extra-Dimensional Movement. (If you're using the new optional *Time Stop* Power on page 38, you could use that instead, possibly with some sort of Limitation to represent the fact that other beings and phenomena aren't necessarily stopped but just greatly slowed.) Since this effect is particularly powerful, additions to and expansions of the cost structure of Extra-Dimensional Movement are required. Additionally, characters who can enter the Speed Zone *must* buy certain ancillary abilities (see below) to reflect the fact that they remain able to interact with the "real world." The GM is free to adjust the cost of Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement or any ancillary abilities as he sees fit to make the cost of the ability balance out its utility... assuming he's willing to let player characters buy them at all.

Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement involves entering another state of reality at a point corresponding to the character's location in the normal world, so the base cost of the Power is 22 Character Points (see 6E1 220). However, that base cost is only enough to take a character into the Millispeed "level" of the zone. Each faster level — each level "down," so to speak — costs an additional +2 Character Points.

The basic "enter the Speed Zone" power described above only allows a character to remain in the Zone for a very short period of time. If he wants to stay in the Speed Zone longer — in other words, if he wants to be able to take more Actions while everyone around him is unable to act — he has to pay more Character Points. Each step down the Time Chart that a character can "remain in the Speed Zone" (subjectively speaking) costs +30 Character Points. See the accompanying table

for a summary of costs, and *How The Speed Zone Works*, below, for more information.

Extra-Dimensional Movement is an Instant Power, and thus only costs END when used. However, due to the subjective distortion of time a character entering the Speed Zone experiences, to him it seems as if the power must be maintained for a long period of time. Therefore, while in the Speed Zone, a character must pay END for his Extra-Dimensional Movement *every Phase*, as if it were a Constant Power. If he stops paying END, he "drops out" of the Speed Zone and back into the normal-speed world, losing any Speed Zone Actions he may not yet have taken. (On the other hand, with the GM's permission he might be able to Push the power to enter faster levels of the Speed Zone.) The character may, of course, buy Reduced Endurance for his Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement.

ANCILLARY ABILITIES

Buying Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement isn't the end of the story, however. Since the character is technically in another "dimension," people in the normal-speed world generally can't affect him... but he can't affect them. He has to pay Character Points to have the ability to affect the normal-speed world while he's in the Speed Zone. Specifically, he *must* buy the following powers:

- *Speed Perception* (page 102) at a level to match or exceed the level of the Speed Zone he can enter (for example, if he can enter the Pico-speed Level, he must buy at least Picospeed Perception)
- *Speed Zone Sight: Dimensional* (see into normal speed world from the Speed Zone) for Sight Group (total cost: 10 points). The character can still see people in the normal-speed world despite the fact that he's moving so fast they can't see him (*i.e.*, even though he's entered another "dimension" using Extra-Dimensional Movement). (This ability as written only covers the Sight Group. To extend it to other Sense Groups, the character must buy Dimensional for them separately, or a generous GM might allow this one ability to cover all standard Senses, only requiring characters to pay Character Points to make purchased Enhanced Senses Transdimensional.)
- *Speed Zone Touch: Transdimensional* (affect the normal speed world; +½) for 10 STR (total cost: 5 points). The character can exert his STR against objects and people in the normal speed world to pick them up and move them, hit them, and so forth. For purposes of this power, STR is assumed to have certain innately "Indirect" effects, in that a character's reach isn't necessarily direct.

How The Speed Zone Works

Since Extra-Dimensional Movement takes a Full Phase to use, it takes a character a Full Phase to enter the Speed Zone (he can decrease the time required using the *Quick Entrance* Advantage indicated in the Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement Cost Table).

PHYSICAL CORRESPONDENCE

The Speed Zone and the normal world are coterminous — that is, their physical spaces correspond exactly. Moving, say, 6m in the Speed Zone means moving the precise same 6m in the normal world.

Similarly, all objects, people, and other phenomena are coterminous. A person walking down the street is walking there in both the normal-speed world and the Speed Zone (the difference is, in the normal speed world he seems to be moving at normal walking speed; in the Speed Zone, from the Fast POV, he seems to be standing still at whatever point he was when the character entered the Zone). Any actions taken in the Speed Zone, like breaking an object, affect both “dimensions,” it’s just that to characters in the Speed Zone (with Fast POV) they seem to be happening at normal, mundane speeds while to characters in the normal-speed world (with Slow POV) they seem to happen instantaneously.

SUBJECTIVE VERSUS OBJECTIVE TIME

The defining feature of the Speed Zone, the aspect that makes it so powerful and potentially unbalancing in the game, is that while a character’s in the Speed Zone, objective time — the normal flow of time in the game — ceases for him. To him time *seems*, subjectively, to continue for a short period (the period he purchased), when in reality it doesn’t continue at all.

In game terms, this gives the character a period of time when he can act but no one else can, and thus a number of Actions he can take while no one else can act at all. To people in the normal-speed world, it seems as if all these Actions take place in the space of the character’s Phase in a single second (1 Segment), but to the character in the Speed Zone, they seem to have taken much longer. Thus, in effect, Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement “compresses” a large period of time into a single “Phase” of the character’s, allowing him to act during that period as if it were as long as he subjectively thinks it is even though only a fraction of a second actually passes objectively.

Since using Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement takes a Full Phase, and this Phase applies both objectively and subjectively, the “first Phase” a character has when entering the Zone is used up by using the power itself. In later Phases he can perform any Action he normally could.

Example: *Kinetik (DEX 30, SPD 10) buys Enter The Speed Zone (1 Turn) for 52 Character Points (plus all the mandatory ancillary abilities). This allows him to enter the Millispeed Zone, giving him a subjective SPD 2. When he activates the power, he gets 1 Turn’s worth of Actions that he can take in the space of a single Phase. This is his “subjective Turn,” during which the world appears frozen and only he can move around and take Actions. However, the first Full Phase of his subjective Turn is always taken up by the act of entering the Speed Zone.*

For example, on his Phase in Segment 2, Kinetik decides to enter the Speed Zone and activates his Extra-Dimensional Movement. He now gets one subjective Turn’s worth of Actions he can take while no one and nothing else can act. His first “Phase,” in “subjective Segment 6,” is lost to using Extra-Dimensional Movement, leaving him one more subjective Phase’s worth of Actions. When he’s done with his subjective Turn, he automatically drops back out of the Speed Zone... right at DEX 30 in objective Segment 2, where he was when he entered the Zone. Other characters who have a Phase in Segment 2 at DEX 29 or lower now get to act — assuming Kinetik’s actions during his subjective Turn haven’t already taken them all out of the fight before they even had a chance to move!

Later Kinetik earns some Experience Points and improves his Enter The Speed Zone so he can access the Femtospeed Zone. That gives him a subjective SPD 10 when he’s in the Zone — a much better situation for him, especially since it matches his real-world SPD.

SPEED ZONE ACTIONS AND COMBAT

While a character is in the Speed Zone, his SPD depends not his *Speed* Characteristic but on the level of the Zone he can access. To put it another way, the faster the level of the Speed Zone a character can access, the more Actions he gets while in the Zone because the faster he seems to be moving compared to the normal-speed world or characters in slower Zone levels. A character in the Millispeed Zone has a subjective SPD 2 during his subjective time in the Zone; one in the Attospeed Zone has subjective SPD 12; characters at the levels in between have other amounts of SPD. (Entering the Speed Zone doesn’t constitute “changing SPD” or require the use of those rules — but remember that the character’s first Phase in the Zone, regardless of what Segment it occurs in, is taken up by the act of having entered the Zone.)

The subjective Phases of a character in the Speed Zone are just like ordinary Phases. In a subjective Phase, a character can perform two Half Phase Actions, or one Full Phase Action, and as many Zero Phase Actions as he likes; if he performs an Attack Action, his Phase ends. Other standard *HERO System* rules about Actions and the like apply unless the GM rules otherwise.

HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE LIGHTS?

In campaigns stressing “realism,” such as some Iron Age Champions games, characters in the Speed Zone (at any level) or who have the Fast POV may have trouble perceiving due to how they interact with light, which itself moves at tremendous speeds. (Any character in the Speed Zone is automatically in a silent world, since he’s traveling faster than the speed of sound; he can only hear speech and other sounds made by characters who are also in the Zone.)

At the Millispeed Level, lighting fed by alternating current (AC) appears to constantly flicker. Incandescent and halogen-based lights appear brighter and dimmer as the lighting filament gets hotter and cooler. Fluorescent lights strobe at a rate harmful to those viewing it for extended periods of time (the human brain cannot accept strobed input for long without developing headaches, nausea, or pseudo-epileptic symptoms). In game terms, the character suffers a minimum of -1 to Sight PER Rolls, and may experience a Drain of CON or STUN if he looks at fluorescent lights for 1 Turn or longer.

At the Microspeed Level, characters can still see (they’re not yet moving near the speed of light, which is approximately 186,000 miles or 300,000,000 meters per second). However, they may experience some visual distortions, since light can only travel 300 meters in the microspeed interval. In game terms, they

suffer a -2 or greater Sight PER Roll penalty in situations where the GM thinks that would be appropriate.

At the Nanospeed Level, visible light can only travel 0.3 meters, and frequencies of light are in this realm. This may make it very difficult to perceive things with sight — characters suffer a -3 or greater Sight PER Roll penalty in situations where the GM thinks that would be appropriate.

At the Picospeed Level, visible light can only travel 0.3 millimeters, which may effectively plunge the speedster into a world of darkness. Characters suffer a -3 or greater Sight PER Roll penalty in situations where the GM thinks that would be appropriate.

At the Femtospeed Level, all infrared and visible light wave movement has stopped, and characters start to see discrete ultraviolet rays. Characters suffer a -4 or greater Sight PER Roll penalty in situations where the GM thinks that would be appropriate.

At the Attospeed Level, all ultraviolet light wave movement has stopped. Characters suffer a -4 or greater Sight PER Roll penalty in situations where the GM thinks that would be appropriate.

Of course, this level of “realism” isn’t appropriate for many campaigns. In the interest of fun and dramatic sense, the GM just lets the speedster go on perceiving as normal.

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A character in the Speed Zone can take any Actions he could take in the normal-speed world during his subjective Phases. He can move, attack, read books, paint a picture, whatever he wants. But his ability to act while other people are “frozen in place” gives him a high-insurmountable tactical advantage.

With the GM’s permission a character can Abort to enter the Speed Zone, since doing so slows or stops attacks against him to the point where he can protect himself from them. However, he may only take defensive Actions while in the Zone after Aborting; if he tries to perform any other types of Actions, he immediately drops out of the Zone back into the normal-speed world.

ATTACKS AGAINST THE NORMAL-SPEED WORLD

A character in the Speed Zone can attack characters and other targets in the normal-speed world. By the rules governing the way the “dimension” of the Speed Zone works, paying for Super-speed Touch and Superspeed Sight lets a character see and affect targets in the normal-speed world in any way. A speedster can punch someone with his fist, pick up a gun and shoot it at a target, fire a Blast, use a Combat or Martial Maneuver, or use a speedster power like Dizzying Spin or Let’s Wrap This Up, all without paying any further Character Points. (By the strict letter of the rules, a character who wants to do these things *should* buy Transdimensional for any attack or effect he wants to use against the normal-speed world. However, the cost of doing so, on top of the cost of Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement, would become prohibitive, so as a shortcut the rules presented here simply require the character to buy Super-speed Touch and extend its effects to all attacks.

Gamemasters who want to be more strict about things should require Transdimensional for any attack or effect a character wants to use against the normal-speed world, perhaps allowing a character to buy a Variable Power Pool solely for buying Transdimensional as a naked Advantage for any of his other powers.)

However, the *effects* of the attacks a character makes and the Actions he takes don’t actually occur, and are not felt, until he “drops out” of the Speed Zone and re-enters the normal-speed world (usually after he’s taken all his subjective Phases). At that point, to the Slow POV suddenly all the attacks and Actions seem to take place at once in a split-second.

Example: *While in the Speed Zone at the Femto-speed level, Kinetik decides to use his first eight subjective Phases to attack eight opponents in the area. Four he Rapid-Fire Punches, two he uses Grab By on to take away their weapons, and two he uses his Sonic Boom Fingersnap on. One by one he moves to the first four and punches each of them dozens of time in the space of his subjective second of action. One by one he moves to the next two and takes away their guns. One by one he moves to the next two and snaps his fingers next to their ears, though he’s moving so quickly there’s no sound yet. On his final subjective Phase, he makes a Full Move away from the battlefield so he has a good view of the fun. Then he drops out of the Speed Zone. It’s still DEX 30 in Segment 2. Suddenly, to persons with the Slow POV, the following simultaneously happen: the first four targets get bashed around (and perhaps take Knockback) as if someone had punched them repeatedly; the weapons in the hands of the next*

two vanish; two mini-sonic booms occur next to the other two and Knock them Out; and Kinetik seems to have instantaneously moved from where he was to his current position... and he's got the two guns with him.

Common and dramatic sense indicate that some attacks and Actions are effectively useless when performed by a character in the Speed Zone. For example, trying to Presence Attack persons in the normal-speed world is a waste of time, because to them the character's actions and words occur so quickly they can't perceive them (and thus he can't be affected by them). The GM has the final say on what a character in the Speed Zone can do, and what the effects of his actions are on the normal-speed world.

Targets in the normal-speed world are at DCV 0 and DMCV 0 against attacks made by a character in the Speed Zone — they're effectively "frozen in place" and helpless against him. They have no capacity to make attacks against him or do anything else that might effect him, even if they have abilities that give them the Fast POV so they can perceive what he's doing. Only other characters who can enter the Speed Zone themselves can oppose him.

COMBAT IN THE SPEED ZONE

If there's another character in the combat who has an objective Phase that Segment and can enter the Speed Zone, things might go a little differently. When a character enters the Speed Zone, the GM must ask any such characters if they, too wish to enter the Speed Zone. If they do, they can enter the Speed Zone at the same moment as the character even if their Phases have not yet occurred in the Segment.

At that point two or more characters are in the Speed Zone and the GM begins tracking the Zone's subjective time as usual. (Of course, as usual when a character's first subjective Phase in the Zone occurs, he "loses" it to having used Enter The Speed Zone.) The characters in the Zone get their usual subjective Phases, and may choose to attack other Speed Zone targets instead of normal-speed world targets. If so, the standard rules about who acts first in a Phase and the like apply. Characters in the Speed Zone have their normal CVs and MCVs against each other, use their normal DEXs to determine who acts first in a Phase, may use any ability against each other as if they were in the normal-speed world, and so forth. Characters at faster levels of the Zone have higher subjective Speed Zone SPDs, giving them more subjective Phases to act in.

LEAVING THE SPEED ZONE

When a character chooses to leave the Speed Zone — he "drops out," in speedster parlance, since he's "dropping down" from Speed Zone speeds to normal-speed world speeds — he returns to the same objective Phase he was in at the same objective point in the DEX order at which he entered the Speed Zone. He cannot choose a later point in the Phase, or wait until a later Segment.

Example: *Kinetik entered the Speed Zone in his Phase in Segment 2 — in other words, on DEX 30 in Segment 2. He takes his full subjective Turn's worth of Speed Zone actions and then must drop out of the Zone, since his Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement won't let him remain in his hyperaccelerated state for more than 1 Turn. When he drops out, it's still DEX 30, Segment 2. Any other normal-speed world characters with DEX 30 who go after him get to act, then the GM continues counting down the DEX order to 29, 28, and so forth until the Segment ends. Of course, this assumes Kinetik's activities in the Speed Zone haven't already ended the combat...*

OTHER SPEED ZONE EFFECTS

When a character enters the Speed Zone, in effect time stops. All activity throughout the normal-speed world (*i.e.*, "Reality") ceases as far as the character is concerned. Only activity in the Speed Zone itself, as discussed on page 102 under *The Fast Point Of View*, continues: activity on levels "above" the one the character occupies occurs, but slowly to the character's point of view; activity on the character's level seems to be moving at ordinary speeds to his perspective (*i.e.*, those events take place as if occurring over a subjective second of time); and activity on levels "below" the one he occupies seems to be moving correspondingly quickly.

Thus, while a character's in the Speed Zone, all normal-speed world activity seems to slow down or cease. For people in the normal-speed world many physical laws seem to be temporarily suspended. Most people are "frozen in place," between ticks of the clock. If someone was falling when a character activated his Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement, to the character's perception that person remains suspended in mid-air (or, at worst, falling much more slowly) until the character leaves the Zone. If someone's about to be hit by a car, everything is "suspended" in mid-collision. (Of course, being in the Speed Zone gives the character a chance to prevent these tragedies from occurring — he can move the person out of the way of the car, and gently lower the falling person to the ground, so that they don't get hurt. This is, in fact, the main heroic use of the Speed Zone in many adventures.) Similarly, most effects that would ordinarily harm the character now cannot. For example, he may be able to walk through a fire or on the surface of a star and feel nothing; the energy is moving so slowly (or is even "frozen") that it lacks the ability to harm him (or inflicts much less harm, as judged by the GM). On the other hand, if the character touches a sharp object, like a blade, he can still cut himself; being in the Speed Zone doesn't remove the object's sharpness or its capacity to harm someone who touches it. The GM should adjudicate other situations as he sees fit.

During the period a character spends in the Speed Zone, no one and nothing in Reality ages, decays, or otherwise suffers any effects from the passage of time... because time isn't passing.

THE SPEED ZONE AS "TIME STOP"

Given the way the Speed Zone works, characters who have the power to manipulate time can use it as a form of "Time Stop" instead of hypervelocity. (Of course, in some campaigns they can simply buy the new optional Power *Time Stop* instead; see page 38.) The special effect of their form of Speed Zone Extra-Dimensional Movement is "Time Stop Extra-Dimensional Movement," in which they freeze time and do whatever they want for the defined period, then let time resume flowing forward once more.


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Even the character himself doesn't age because his perception and use of the "extra time" is only subjective. However, many speedsters have Limitations or Complications that make them age faster than normal because their powers "burn them up" more quickly, and one possible explanation for that might be all the time the character spends in the Speed Zone.

OTHER "ZONES"

If you think of the Speed Zone concept as "entering another "type" of reality where events don't move at the same pace as "normal reality," you can extend the concept to cover other types of activity than just "moving really fast." Some examples are described below.

But just because the rules for the various Zones are largely the same doesn't mean the Zones themselves are. A character in one type of Zone is no more able to affect a character in the Speed Zone (for example) than any other character, or vice-versa.

The Mind Zone

In many comics, movies, and novels, characters with mental powers often engage in psychic combat or psionic duels in the blink of an eye, without normal people having any idea what they're doing or any ability to get involved in any way. You can simulate this by having mental combats take place in the *Mind Zone*.

Also known as the "Psychic Zone," the Mind Zone is a "layer" of reality where only mental abilities function. Characters with psionic powers (typically the standard *HERO System* Mental Powers, but at the GM's option also powers that simulate Mental Powers through the use of ACV, AVAD, and other Power Modifiers) can "project" their "mental selves" into the Mind Zone to do battle while the physical world remains "frozen," and perhaps even unperceived, around them.

In the Mind Zone, the differing "levels" (and thus SPDs characters have in the Zone) represent increasing levels of psionic ability and skill, rather than moving faster. Other conceptual and rules changes necessary to use the Speed Zone as the Mind Zone include:

- unlike characters in the Speed Zone, characters in the Mind Zone typically *cannot* affect (or even perceive) beings or objects in normal reality in any way — they can only battle (or otherwise interact with) other Mind Zone projections, beings, or phenomena. (However, the GM might choose to allow a character in the Mind Zone to affect the normal world in some ways or situations, or may permit this for abilities bought with the properly-defined form of Transdimensional.)
- The Mind Zone and the normal world are *not* coterminous — their physical spaces don't correspond. When a character first enters

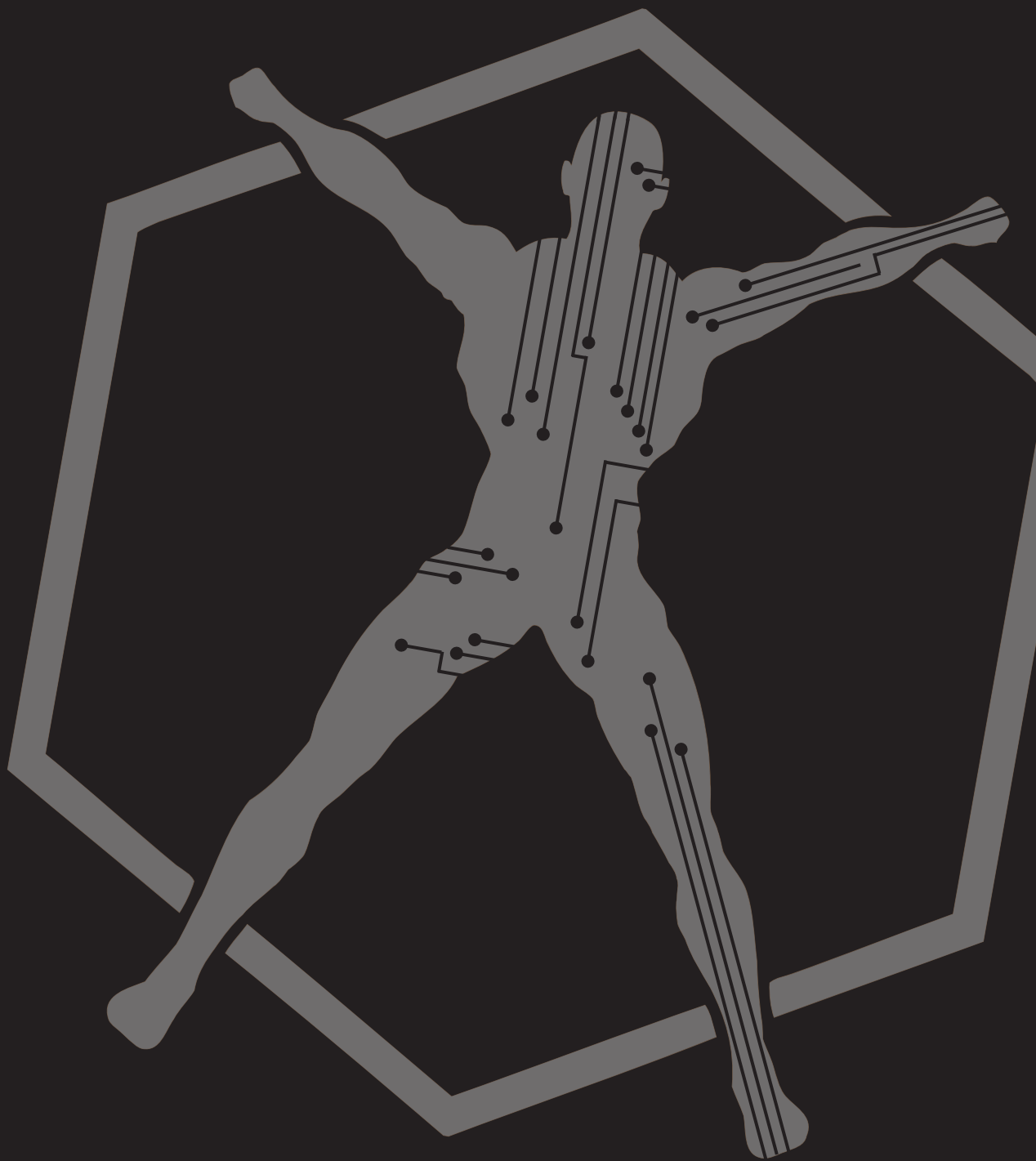
the Mind Zone, he does so at a point corresponding to his location in the physical world. But after that, a character can move enormous distances in the Mind Zone while his physical body remains in place. In fact, his physical body *must* remain in place; while he's in the Mind Zone a character only moves, acts, reacts, and fights against other mentalists who are also in the Mind Zone. He can't affect (or even perceive) the physical world at all — but it can't affect or perceive him either, since his time in the Mind Zone occurs "at the speed of thought" at which physical actions or events of any kind are impossible.

The Mystic (Or Astral) Zone

In some Fantasy stories, wizards and other spellcasters can project their "astral selves" out of their bodies to battle some types of magical creatures (or each other), visit other dimensions, or escape a restrained physical form. You can conceive of this as entering the *Mystic Zone* (or perhaps "Astral Zone").

The Mystic Zone works similarly to the Mind Zone, but with these changes:

- depending on how magic works in the setting, characters in the Mystic Zone may be able to affect the normal world in some ways (much like characters in the Speed Zone). Typically this only applies to the use of spells (and possibly only some types of spells); they cannot physically touch or interact with non-astral beings or phenomena.
- similarly, characters in the Mystic Zone may be able to perceive the normal world without any difficulty (even if they can't affect it). This also depends largely on how the GM designs his magic system and the "multiverse" of his campaign setting.



CHAPTER FOUR
ENVIRONMENT
AND EQUIPMENT



THE ENVIRONMENT

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for the environment.

FALLING

If someone is falling, a character cannot use Flight, Usable As Attack, to immediately and safely stop him in mid-air (unless the GM rules otherwise). That would make Flight UAA in tiny amounts far too effective. Flight UAA used to stop a fall can subtract its meters of movement from the falling velocity per Phase to slow the falling person down (and hopefully stop them before they hit the ground).

Example: *AngelMan's artificial wings have been torn off and he's falling to his death. He's reached terminal velocity of 60m per Segment. Gravity-master has Flight 10m, Usable As Attack, and wants to try to save AngelMan (he could try to use his Telekinesis instead, but that could result in AngelMan getting hurt, as discussed on 6E2 140-41). The first Phase he uses the power, he reduces AngelMan's velocity to (60 - 10 =) 50m per Segment. The next Phase he reduces him to 40m per Segment, and so on, until AngelMan is hovering in midair or hits the ground.*

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Here are some environmental effects to consider in addition to the ones on 6E2 142-46.

Disease And Illness

Although PCs usually don't get sick as often as NPCs, disease is a fact of life in many campaigns, particularly Fantasy games where hygiene and medical science are often poor at best.

DISEASES IN GAME TERMS

In *HERO System* terms, diseases are usually represented as Drains. Typically they affect CON (for illnesses that sicken and weaken but are unlikely to kill the victim) or BODY (for diseases that are often fatal). Drains of END and STUN are also common to represent how being very sick tends to fatigue the victim and stress his system. Some diseases may affect other Characteristics (such as palsy reducing DEX, muscle cramps reducing STR, or various diseases reducing Striking Appearance due to sores, lesions, and the like). Virulent diseases may affect multiple Characteristics at once via Expanded Effect. The following Power Modifiers are often applied:

- Delayed Return Rate (typically 5 Character Points per Week, representing how long it takes a victim to regain full health... if he survives at all)
- Damage Over Time (most diseases progress over time, beginning at a low "level" of effect and becoming worse over hours or days; DoT represents this perfectly; it should usually include the "defense only applies once" and "can only be used once on victim until all increments accrue" modifiers)
- NND (the defense being an appropriate Life Support: Immunity; in the case of diseases transmitted by air being inside a sealed environment [LS: Self-Contained Breathing] may also be a defense. Without this Advantage, ordinary Power Defense would protect against diseases, which generally isn't "realistic" at all.)
- Extra Time (the "onset time" between exposure and when the disease begins to affect

the victim, usually rated in hours or days and sometimes depending on when an earlier stage of the disease takes effect)

See HSB 27-28 for two example diseases (rabies and bubonic plague); HSEG 215 adds inhalation anthrax to the list. All of these diseases are built in “stages” defined by Linked effects; the GM can easily design other serious illnesses using this same model if desired.

The amount of dice in the Drain reflects the potential severity of the disease. A standard cold or flu might be just 1-2 dice of Drain CON, but the sorts of major illnesses that usually become a factor in games often feature 3-6 dice of more than one Drain.

CURING DISEASE

Protecting one's self against disease is simple: have the appropriate form of Immunity (usually as a result of an inoculation received at some point during the character's life, a protective spell, or the like). However, Immunities are fairly rare among PCs, and in any event the super-diseases, bioweapons, and other illnesses they're likely to face tend to be ones most people rarely become Immune to. In short — usually characters have to rely on finding a cure rather than preventing themselves (or their friends) from getting sick in the first place.

Generally speaking there are three ways to represent “curing disease” in *HERO System* terms.

HEALING

The most obvious way to cure disease is to use Healing. To create a broad-spectrum curative power, the Healing needs some level of the *Variable Effect* Advantage so it can apply to more than one Characteristic. That way it can, for example, cure the CON, END, and BODY loss from inhalation anthrax. Depending on the value of the Advantage, a character may have to use Healing several times to counteract all of a disease's effects, or just one use may suffice.

Healing suffers from one drawback when it comes to curing disease: it can only replace Characteristic points that have already been lost. Most diseases work slowly, using Damage Over Time to simulate the slow acquisition of a lot of Drain. A Healing can replace any Characteristic points lost to the disease up until the point at which it's applied, but it doesn't stop the rest of the damage from accumulating or otherwise “counteract” the ongoing disease. To cure a disease fully with Healing, a character has to apply it to the sick person several times over the course of the illness.

If the GM doesn't like this approach, he can change things so Healing *can* counteract a disease fully. He simply rolls the full effect of the disease in advance so that he knows its “maximum damage.” A character with Healing can then apply Healing up to that full total, and when he equals or exceeds that total the disease ceases to have any effect.

TRANSFORM

Second, a character can buy a Major Transform — “person with a disease to person without that disease.” This has two effects. First, it completely eliminates the disease (so that it doesn't continue to affect the character). Second, by using the rules for “adding abilities” via Transform it can restore Characteristic points already lost to the disease. (Otherwise, the character simply has to regain those lost points normally using the fade rate for the Drain.) Alternately, at the GM's option a character could buy a Minor Transform that stops the disease from progressing but can never “heal” Characteristic points already lost to the disease.

The *Cure Illness* spell on HSG 88 uses the Transform method. It seems to do the best job of simulating the broad-spectrum effect of the curative magics seen in most Fantasy games. In more “realistic” settings or genres, the Transform method may be too powerful or effective.

AID

Third, a character could buy an Aid that only works to “counteract” diseases. The Aid would have a fade rate equal to the fade rate of the Drain, and a Limitation indicating that it only works on diseased persons. By artificially raising a diseased person's affected Characteristics, the Aid effectively neutralizes the disease. However, this may not be a cost-effective method compared to Healing or Transform, and like Healing it has to be applied multiple times to overcome the Damage Over Time accumulation. Thus, Aid probably isn't a good choice for most games, though it may be appropriate for lower-powered campaigns or some specific types of curative abilities.

CURING SPECIFIC DISEASES

With any of the methods described above, there's no need to specify the type of disease a power can cure. Healing, Transform, and Aid just “correct” the effects of certain Drains, as indicated by the power's description (for example: Healing 3d6, any disease-reduced Characteristic at once; Major Transform 4d6 [person with a disease to person without that disease]). If a character wanted to have a power that could only cure a specific disease, or a specific category of diseases (such as one of the ones listed on the Life Support Table), he can represent that by applying an appropriate Limitation to the power.

Sleep And Sleep Deprivation

Characters who don't have some amount of Life Support: Diminished Sleep require a minimum of six hours of sleep per day (24 hour period) to function effectively. They can get that sleep all at once (which is best) or over several smaller periods, but it has to add up to six hours. For every hour less than six hours of sleep a character gets, reduce his Long-Term Endurance by 1. Thus, as discussed on 6E2 132, his regular END will be restricted as well. As a character becomes more and more tired from sleep deprivation, he becomes fatigued more and more easily, hampering his ability to function effectively.

But characters who suffer from sleep deprivation don't just become tired; lack of sleep affects various other physiological functions. These include:

- diminishment of a character's mental processes, causing confusion, memory loss, and impaired reasoning and perception. For every full -4 LTE a character loses due to lack of sleep he suffers a -1 on all INT Rolls, Intellect Skill rolls, and PER Rolls.
- irritability. At the GM's option, a character suffering from significant sleep deprivation (-6 LTE or more) may have a harder time resisting the effects of certain Enrageds/Berserks and Psychological Complications; alter any rolls as necessary to reflect this. The worse the sleep deprivation, the worse for the character the modifiers should become.
- microsleeps. At the GM's option, once a character reaches -10 LTE or more from sleep deprivation, he may experience microsleeps — falling into a sleep-like state for 1-30 seconds (to determine this randomly, roll 1d6, then roll the indicated number of d6s to determine the seconds of microsleep, thus generating a number from 1-36). A microsleep can strike at any time, regardless of what a character's doing... which can be a serious problem if he's driving, in combat, or engaged in some other potentially dangerous activity. The character typically has no awareness of what's happened; he thinks he's been awake the entire time.
- hand tremors. Once a character reaches -18 LTE or more from sleep deprivation he may suffer from hand tremors that impose a -1 (or greater) penalty on DEX-related rolls representing deft use of the hands (such as Lock-picking rolls).
- hallucinations. Once a character reaches -24 LTE or more from sleep deprivation he may experience hallucinations. The GM decides what the character experiences, how long the hallucinations last, and so forth.

A character regains LTE lost to sleep deprivation following the usual rules for regaining Long-Term Endurance (see 6E2 133). However, unless the GM rules otherwise, the "rest" involved has

to be actual *sleep*, not just "rest and relaxation." In short, a character can make up for missing some sleep by getting a *lot* of sleep later on.

POOR-QUALITY SLEEP

Sometimes characters can get six hours' sleep per night... but it's not good sleep. Maybe they have to sleep in armor, or on rough ground, or in a situation where they're frequently awoken for a second or two. To represent this, the GM can reduce the number of hours of sleep the character gets to reflect how much "good sleep" he got in the time period. For example, the GM might reduce eight hours of poor sleep to just four hours' good sleep.

PERCEPTION WHILE ASLEEP

As noted on 6E1 114 under the discussion of the *Lightsleep* Talent, a character is at a minimum -6 penalty to all PER Rolls when asleep (assuming the GM allows him to make a PER Roll at all).

A character with *Lightsleep* doesn't suffer this penalty; he can perceive things that might awaken him much more easily.

COMBAT

A sleeping character is at DCV 0, DMCV 0 and cannot fight. The penalty for targeting specific Hit Locations against him is halved. All hits do 2x STUN damage, since he's automatically considered "Surprised."

At the GM's option, if a sleep-deprived character is hit with a power, ability, or weapon whose special effect is "induces sleep" (such as the Sleep-Spell on HSG 261), he suffers an additional effect equal to the amount of LTE he's lost to sleep deprivation. For example, if a character's so sleep-deprived that he's at -10 LTE, and he's hit with a Sleep-Spell that does 25 STUN damage, he actually takes 35 STUN (25 + 10 from LTE loss). This represents the fact that he's particularly susceptible to being made to fall asleep. (Alternately, you can simply consider sleep-deprived characters as being Vulnerable [2x effect] to Sleep attacks.)

ATTACKING AND DESTROYING LARGE OBJECTS

The *HERO System* rules are set up to model combat between individual characters, and include rules for objects and environmental factors they might interact with. This works fine even for extremely powerful characters in most campaigns, since they're not likely to attack or try to destroy objects larger than man-made structures (such as skyscrapers and suspension bridges).

However, some campaigns take place on a larger scale. Characters, or the weapons they wield, have the ability to destroy mountains, planets, and even stars. This section provides rules for damaging extremely large (more or less solid) objects. (Rules for damaging walls and similar objects, including the "shells" of extremely large hollow objects such as some buildings and vehicles, are on 6E2 173.)

The test case for these rules is the planet Earth. Earth has a volume of 1.37×10^{20} cubic meters. According to 6E2 171, a cubic meter of stone has 19 BODY (and 5 PD/10 ED). (Of course, the Earth isn't made up just of stone; there's earth, metal, and molten stuff in there. But to keep these rules from getting too complicated it's assumed that Earth's entirely made of stone and that this averages out the "softer" and "denser" parts. Gamers interested in more precise figures are welcome to run some calculations on their own.)

The simplest way to address the issue of damaging large objects is to assume that every cubic meter of a large object has its full BODY and has to be reduced to 0 BODY to destroy it. That means Earth has 2.6×10^{21} BODY, requiring approximately 7.4×10^{20} dice of Killing Damage to destroy in a single attack (assuming an average of 3.5 points of BODY damage per die). While "realistic," that's untenable for most *HERO System* games, which after all are supposed to simulate "dramatic reality." If the Death Star can blow up Alderaan, then characters in *HERO System* games

should have the chance to do so as well... GM willing.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, it would be possible to adapt the rule used for walls — double the size of the hole created for each +1 BODY damage — for large objects. This would mean an extremely large object would have a defined amount of BODY for one cubic meter (based on the materials it's made of), and each doubling of size of the object would add +1 BODY. In that case, since Earth is made of stone and it takes 67 doublings to get from one cubic meter to 10^{20} cubic meters, Earth would only have 86 BODY. That makes it *too* easy to destroy a planet; a character with an RKA 2d6 could take care of the job in pretty short order.

Obviously a happy medium is necessary, one that allows for the "dramatic realism" possibilities of destroying large objects with really large attacks, while making it a difficult (if not impossible) task for characters to accomplish with ordinary weapons. The following rules are suggested as a default, but each GM should decide how easily characters can destroy large objects and adjust the rules to suit his campaign.

1. A large object (such as a mountain or planet) can be destroyed one small piece at a time by ordinary attacks. For example, you can consider each 19 BODY damage done to a mountain or planet (after it applies its defenses, typically equal to the PD/ED for rock) to have destroyed one cubic meter's worth of that object. Naturally, this is likely to take a very long time for most large objects.
2. To destroy a large object more quickly, characters must apply Area Of Effect and MegaScale so that an attack affects a greater portion of a large object at once. Typically this is done with Area Of Effect (1m Radius; +¼) and MegaScale bought to match the size of the object (thus, affecting an entire mountain would require MegaScale at about the +1 ¼ level, whereas affecting an entire planet requires +2 MegaScale).
3. The GM may also consider extremely large objects to be Hardened and/or Impenetrable by default to represent their size and general durability.

With these rules in mind, here's how you'd build an attack capable of instantly destroying Earth: RKA 10d6 (standard effect: 30 BODY), Area Of Effect (1m Radius; +¼), MegaScale (affects entire Earth; +2). Total cost: 487 points.



EQUIPMENT

COMBAT SKILL LEVELS FOR EQUIPMENT

Combat Skill Levels for equipment raise some interesting issues. As discussed in HSV, if a Vehicle buys CSLs,

those CSLs are used

by whoever's operating the Vehicle (be it a PC, and NPC, or a Computer).

As discussed in *The Ultimate Base*, that rule also applies to Bases. In both cases this is because Vehicles and Bases, even though they have separate character sheets, are essentially objects. They can't really do anything on their own; they have to have some sort of operator.

However, a Computer is a beast of a different color. It's self-willed (to a greater or lesser extent), and thus able to attack in combat (though of course it requires the proper programming to actually do so). Therefore, any CSLs (or other Skill Levels) a Computer buys are usable only by it. If a Computer wants to be able to provide those CSLs to someone else, they would have to be bought with some form of UOO.

Here are some new, expanded, and/or optional rules for various types of equipment.

Automatons

Many Automatons are defined as being robots or other machines. However, that does *not* automatically make them susceptible to Mental Powers that affect the Machine class of minds, since Automatons are immune to Mental Powers. But as shown in many published character sheets for robots and the like, it's not at all uncommon for robots to have a Physical Complication indicating that they *can* be affected by Machine-class Mental Powers. (The same applies to undead creatures, who have a Physical Complication allowing Necromancy spells built with Mental Powers to affect them, and you can extend this same reasoning to other types of Automata as desired.) Typically this is an Infrequently, Slightly Impairing Physical Complication worth 10 points, and the GM defines how much "EGO" the Automaton receives (published examples range from 5 for a common domestic robot, to 10-13 for typical skeletons and zombies, to 25 for combat-oriented robots). The Frequency of the Physical Complication may change based on how common Mental Powers that can affect a specific Automaton are in the campaign.

It's possible for Automatons to buy Mental Powers (though rare). However, since they automatically start with 0 EGO, 0 OMCV, and 0 DMCV, they may not be very effective in mental combat.

See page 36 regarding Automatons with *Takes No STUN* using defensive equipment.

Computers

As noted on 6E2 183, Computers have no innate Senses — they have to buy normal Senses at the standard cost or be "hooked into" Senses provided by a Base or Vehicle. Bases and Vehicles often buy Clairsentience as a Sense (often their only Sense), thus allowing characters in them to see over long distances or observe multiple locations at once. Since Clairsentience doesn't ordinarily grant a character Senses he lacks, but

only allows him to use Senses he already has at "Range," a Base's or Vehicle's Clairsentience doesn't technically provide a Computer with any Senses at all. However, in the interest of common sense, dramatic sense, and uncluttered character sheets, a GM could certainly rule that being hooked into Clairsentience-based sensors alone would grant a Computer the "default" Senses for any Sense Group the Clairsentience applies to (such as Normal Sight when the Clairsentience applies to the Sight Group).

Weapons

Some weapons provide bonuses to Maneuvers other than Strike — for example, the sai provides +2 OCV to Block, Bind, and Disarm attempts (see HSMA 259, 268; HSEG 14, 24). If a character wields *two* such weapons, one in each hand, typically he does *not* gain this bonus twice (no more than a character wielding two weapons that both provide +1 OCV gets to add +2 OCV to all of his attacks). However, the GM can make exceptions when he feels that's appropriate (as it might be in the case of Block, since that's a defensive Maneuver rather than an attack, and the rules tend to be more forgiving when characters protect themselves from harm).

Armor And Shields

Generally speaking, characters shouldn't take the *Mass Limitation* (6E2 211) on Foci other than armor — if it were intended for general use it would be in the Limitations section of 6E1, not on 6E2 211 in a very specific part of the rules. However, each GM can make that call for himself; in some Heroic games where Encumbrance is a major factor it may be an intriguing option for Foci other than armor. (See also the *Expanded Focus Rules*, below, for information on determining the mass of gadgets.)

Whether worn armor, either normal or magical, protects the wearer against falling damage is generally up to the GM. Some GMs prefer to stress "realism" to some extent in their campaigns, and those GMs often rule that armor provides little or no protection against falling damage. In fact, the *Real Armor* (-¼) rules on 6E2 210 notes that this may be the case for armors

built with that Limitation. Other GMs find it easier just to let armor protect against every type of Physical or Energy damage. The situation becomes more complicated in campaigns featuring magical armor, which often isn't built with Real Armor (-¼) and may have other protective abilities (like Damage Negation or Damage Reduction). Here the GM's judgment is even more important, since the GM defines how magic (and thus enchanted items) function in his campaign.

EXPANDED FOCUS RULES

The standard rules for building Foci (6E1 376-80) work well for nearly all campaigns and characters. However, some games use gadgetry so frequently that a more detailed system for defining how Foci function in game terms is desirable. This section of APG2 expands the rules for building Foci, making it possible for characters to precisely define every important aspect of their weapons and devices.

In the expanded Focus rules, characters begin by choosing the Obviousness and Accessibility of their Foci as normal (thus creating an OAF, OIF, IAF, or IIF). That sets the base value of the Limitation and defines the most important aspects of the Focus. Then characters spend *Focus Building Points* (FBPs) to define the secondary attributes of a Focus: its defenses, BODY, size, mass, and so on. Qualities perceived as beneficial (like being smaller, lighter weight, or tougher) cost FBPs, while qualities perceived as negative save him FBPs (or more accurately, "cost" negative FBPs). When a character's done creating his Focus, he looks at the total amount of FBPs he's spent. If that total is positive, he may have to reduce the Limitation value of Focus for the gadget (perhaps even converting it to an Advantage); if the total is negative, he may get to increase the Limitation value of Focus.

Characters don't start with any predetermined "amount" of Focus Building Points, and there are no restrictions on the amount of FBPs they can spend (unless the GM sets one for some reason). The only question, in the end, is whether a character's willing and able to pay Character Points (based on reducing the value of the *Focus* Limitation or changing it to an Advantage) for all the improvements he's made to his Focus. If he is, everything's fine; if not, he needs to scale back on the FBPs to avoid the impact on his Character Points.

These rules only apply to Focus, not to other Limitations (such as OIAID or Physical Manifestation). If the GM wants to adapt these rules to other Limitations or aspects of the *HERO System*, he can do so, but must determine and address the implications for himself.

HERO SYSTEM CHANGES

If you're using the expanded Focus rules, you should not use the following rules, Power Modifiers, and other aspects of the *HERO System*: Mobility of Foci (6E1 378); Durability of Foci (6E1 378-79); the "Real" Limitations (6E2 200-01, 210-12); the *Mass* Limitation for armor (6E2 211-12). Other Focus rules (such as for Expendable Foci) are still used.

THE DEFAULT FOCUS

Under the expanded Focus rules, the default starting gadget has the following characteristics:

- it has PD 2, ED 2 (both Resistant)
- it has 2 BODY
- it has a Concealment modifier of +5 (making it roughly equal in size to a rifle or shotgun)
- it has a mass of 2 kg (4.4 pounds)
- it's Universal (usable by anyone)
- it's not "real" (see below)

A character spends Focus Building Points to vary these characteristics in ways that benefit or hinder him. Initially every Focus has 0 FBPs spent on it (or saved by making it worse).

Focus Defense

The default Focus has 2 PD and 2 ED (both Resistant). However, there's one exception: a Focus that provides points of defense to a character (such as ordinary PD and ED, or Resistant Protection PD and ED) has that many points of PD and ED itself.

Each +2 points of defense, or fraction thereof (either +2 PD, +2 ED, or +1 PD/+1 ED) costs 1 FBP.

Each -2 points of defense, or fraction thereof (either -2 PD, -2 ED, or -1 PD/-1 ED) "costs" -1 FBP (i.e., it "saves" 1 FBP). A Focus's PD and ED cannot be reduced below 0 each.

Typically a Focus should have PD and ED based on the materials it's primarily made of (such as metal for a sword or gun, or wood for a club or staff). Consult the Breaking Things rules on 6E2 170-73. There you'll find guidelines for how much PD and ED typical substances and objects tend to have. However, they're just that — guidelines. Not every Focus needs to be as "realistic" as that, especially in campaigns featuring magic, superpowers, or other fantastic phenomena. Many gadgets aren't that sturdy (often because some of their parts or components are particularly fragile), and some have been "toughened" to withstand more punishment than usual.

BODY AND DEFENSE IN TWO SYSTEMS

As you choose the BODY, PD, and ED for your Foci in the advanced Focus rules, consider the trade-off involved.

Under the standard rules, Foci tend to be very “sturdy” — high defenses and BODY (both equal to Active Points/5). However, even a single point of damage that gets past those defenses results in the loss of a power (and many Foci only have a single power, so that 1 point of damage ruins them). That being the case, high defenses create an appropriate game balance.

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On the other hand, the advanced Focus system uses a different rule: the standard rules for breaking objects. Therefore 1 BODY damage may or may not affect whether a gadget continues to work, and some gadgets may withstand multiple attacks before breaking even if they have relatively low defenses. Therefore BODY, PD, and ED have an FBP cost (and thus may increase a Focus's Character Point cost to a character) because they tend to keep a gadget in good working order longer.

OTHER FORMS OF DEFENSE

Characters may also buy Flash Defense, Mental Defense, or Power Defense for their Foci, if desired. (Usually only the latter is useful, since most Foci have no Senses to Flash or minds to affect with Mental Powers.) Any of these defenses cost 3 FBPs for each +2 points of defense (or fraction thereof); these defenses are Resistant. With the GM's permission, a character can “split” these purchases like they can with PD and ED — for example, a character could give his Focus Sight Group Flash Defense (1 point) and Power Defense (1 point) for 3 FBPs.

Focus BODY

The default Focus has 2 BODY.

Each +1 BODY costs 1 FBP.

Reducing a Focus to 1 BODY “costs” -1 FBP (*i.e.*, it “saves” 1 FBP). Characters cannot reduce a Focus's BODY to 0; the lowest a Focus's BODY can go is 1.

Typically a Focus should have BODY based on the materials it's primarily made of (such as metal for a sword or gun, or wood for a club or staff). Consult the Breaking Things rules on 6E2 170-73. There you'll find guidelines for how much BODY typical substances and objects tend to have. However, they're just that — guidelines. Not every Focus needs to be as “realistic” as that, especially in campaigns featuring magic, superpowers, or other fantastic phenomena. Many gadgets aren't that sturdy (often because some of their parts or components are particularly fragile), and some have been “toughened” to withstand more punishment than usual. Even if a gadget has a lot of defense, it could have a low amount of BODY to reflect the fragility of its internal components. Conversely, a Focus could be easy to damage (low defenses) but so massive or sturdy that it has a lot of BODY.

When a character damages a Focus built using the expanded Focus rules, the GM should use the broken machinery rules and Device Malfunction Table (6E2 172-73) to determine the results (ignore the standard Focus rule of “loses one power for each attack that does any amount of BODY damage”). For complex Foci that have multiple functions (powers/abilities), or whose ability(ies) are easily subdivided into levels of effect or categories, the GM can come up with more precise rules if he so desires. For example, suppose a magic wand is defined as a Multipower with six slots. The GM rules that for each one-sixth of its BODY it takes in damage, it loses one slot (determined randomly by rolling 1d6).

UNBREAKABLE FOCI

As noted on 6E1 379, some Foci are *Unbreakable* — they cannot be broken by any force (except one way a character has to define). This is totally inappropriate for any Focus that's in any way “realistic,” but makes sense for some types of high-powered campaigns (such as many Superheroes and Fantasy games). For example, it's

not uncommon for the characters in Superhero campaigns to have one-of-a-kind items made from super-scientific substances that render them Unbreakable, and in a High Fantasy campaign finding the one way possible to destroy an Unbreakable evil artifact may be the motivation driving the PCs through the entire game.

In the Focus Building Point system, a Focus qualifies as Unbreakable (and thus subject to the rules on 6E1 379) when it's bought with the following:

- PD and ED both equal to or greater than its Active Points divided by 2 (excluding any Active Points added if the FBP rules convert Focus into an Advantage)
- BODY both equal to or greater than its Active Points divided by 2 (excluding any Active Points added if the FBP rules convert Focus into an Advantage)

The GM can establish a minimum (or maximum) amount of PD, ED, and BODY that must be bought to make a Focus Unbreakable, regardless of the rule above.

These rules mean it's likely that having an Unbreakable Focus will end up costing a PC Character Points by making Focus worth less of a Limitation (or even converting it into an Advantage). This is in contrast to the standard rules, which charge nothing for Unbreakable because making a Focus Unbreakable rarely has any significant effect on game play or balance. If the GM prefers this approach, he can allow characters to simply declare that a Focus is Unbreakable, regardless of what PD, ED, and BODY it has, for 0 FBPs. However, the GM shouldn't permit this if characters try to use it as a cheap and easy way of avoiding paying for the appropriate defenses and BODY for a Focus. A character who wants a Focus made of metal has to pay to properly define its PD, ED, and BODY at an appropriate level for a metal object whether his Focus is Unbreakable or not.

Focus Size

The size of a Focus (or any other object) in the *HERO System* is defined primarily by two factors: how easily a character can hide it using Concealment (or find it with a PER Roll once hidden); and how its size modifies the OCV of someone trying to hit it with an attack.

The default Focus has a Concealment modifier of +5. This makes it roughly equal in size to a rifle, shotgun, average crossbow, large sword, or small assault rifle. It can be considered to fit into the “Small” Target Size category, meaning attackers suffer a -2 OCV penalty when trying to hit it with an attack. The accompanying table indicates the cost for changing a Focus's size.

Size and mass are usually “linked” to some degree — the larger a Focus the heavier it tends to be, and vice-versa. As a guideline, for every step down the Focus Size Table below +0 (*i.e.*, for every roughly halving of size), a Focus's mass should

be halved; for every step up the Focus Size Table above +0 (*i.e.*, for every roughly doubling of size), it should be doubled. But that's not mandatory; it's possible to have a large but lightweight Focus, or a tiny but extremely heavy one.

BULKY AND IMMOBILE FOCI

Sometimes Foci are *Bulky*, meaning unusually awkward to handle or carry — using one reduces a character to ½ DCV (see 6E1 378). Defining a Focus as Bulky “costs” -10 FBPs (*i.e.*, it “saves” 10 FBPs). Typically this is only appropriate for Foci with a positive Target Size modifier (*i.e.*, which are human-sized or larger, roughly speaking, or equivalently difficult to handle for some reason).

Some Foci are even worse than Bulky, they're *Immobile* — they can't be moved at all. Defining a Focus as Immobile “costs” -20 FBPs (*i.e.*, it “saves” 20 FBPs). Most Immobile Foci are also quite large (+8 or greater Concealment modifier), but this isn't mandatory.

ARRANGEMENT

As noted on 6E1 378, some Foci have to be precisely arranged before a character can use them. This is most common with ritual paraphernalia for spellcasting, of course, but other examples exist. Defining a Focus as requiring Arrangement “costs” -3 FBPs (*i.e.*, it “saves” 3 FBPs).

Focus Mass

The default Focus has a mass of 2 kg (4.4 pounds). These rules assume that the less a Focus weighs, the better it is for the character buying/using it — it encumbers him less, can be Thrown further, and so forth.

Up to halving a Focus's mass (to 1 kg) costs 3 FBPs; each additional up to halving (to .5 kg, .25 kg, and so on) costs an additional +3 FBPs.

Up to doubling a Focus's mass (to 4 kg) “costs” -2 FBPs (*i.e.*, it “saves” 2 FBPs). Each additional up to doubling (to 8 kg, 16 kg, and so on) “costs” an additional -2 FBPs.

As noted above, a Focus's mass often increases/decreases as it becomes larger/smaller, but this isn't required. For example, one property of many enchanted items in Fantasy campaigns is that they're not nearly as heavy or cumbersome as regular items — even if it provides no more protection than ordinary plate armor, a suit of plate armor that weighs the same as ordinary clothing allows the wearer to be much more maneuverable, and tires him out more slowly. The accompanying table provides some example masses for common Foci and similar objects. The weapons tables in HSEG and FH, the price list on FH 174-80, and the Strength Tables on 6E1 43, APG 8-9, and FH 109 provide dozens of examples of the mass of specific items.

FOCUS SIZE

RBP Cost	Concealment Modifier	Target Size Modifier	Examples
-6	+11	+5	
-5	+10	+4 (Enormous)	
-4	+9	+3	
-3	+8	+2 (Large)	Pike, long spear, lance
-2	+7	+1	Large bow/crossbow/rifle/assault rifle/staff
-1	+6	+0	Adult human, average staff, large sword, spear
0	+5	-2 (Small)	Rifle, shotgun, crossbow, many swords
1	+4	-4 (Diminutive)	Many swords, small rifle, submachine gun
2	+3	-6 (Tiny)	Large pistol, short bow, short sword, laptop
3	+2	-8 (Minuscule)	Small pistol, average book, wand
4	+1	-10 (Minute)	Roll of cash, small coin pouch, grenade, knife
5	+0	-12 (Insectile)	Coin, gemstone, ring, roll of film, earring, shuriken

See 6E2 176 for more examples of objects by size.

Typically a Short weapon has a Concealment modifier of +1 to +3; a Medium one +4 to +6; a Long one +6 to +7, and an Extra Long one +8 or more. See 6E2 201-02 for more information on weapon lengths.

The listed examples provide a guideline for reference purposes, but unless the GM rules otherwise, a character can define the size rating of his gadget — in game terms, its Concealment/PER modifier and the OCV penalty to hit it — as whatever he wants. If a character wants an assault rifle he can easily conceal in his hat, he can have one, provided the GM doesn't object. “Realistically” most Foci should fall pretty close to the examples in the table, but not every game is realistic.

FOCUS MASS TABLE

Cost	Mass	Examples
-5	32.1 to 64 kg	Full plate armor, heavy machine gun
-4	16.1 to 32 kg	Chainmail, plate armor suit
-3	8.1 to 16 kg	Scale mail armor, average machine gun
-2	4.1 to 8 kg	Hide armor, heavy leather or cuir-bouilli armor, medium or large shield, heavy crossbow, heavy rifle, light machine gun, bowling ball
-1	2.1 to 4 kg	Soft leather armor, greatsword, submachine gun, light rifle, shotgun
0	1.1 to 2 kg	Battle axe, longsword, short sword, medium spear, mace, light crossbow, heavy pistol
1	0.6 to 1 kg	Dagger, rapier, staff, light pistol, heavy robes, most bows
2	0.26 to 0.5 kg	Knife, grenade, shuriken, human heart, metal bracers, heavy article of clothing
3	0.126 to 0.25 kg	Baseball, average article of clothing, boots
4	0.065 to 0.125 kg	Leather bracers, light article of clothing
5	0.033 to 0.064 kg	Golf ball, arrows (sheaf of 10)
6	0.017 to 0.032 kg	Wand, large items of jewelry
7	0.009 to 0.016 kg	Ring, most items of jewelry, Hope Diamond
8	0.005 to 0.008 kg	Most coins, most earrings



ENCUMBRANCE

The mass of a Focus built using the expanded Focus rules has to be taken into account when determining how Encumbered a character is (see 6E2 46). It won't affect a character much to wear items of clothing that are built as Foci, but if he starts to carry a lot of weapons or armor the weight can quickly add up!

Focus Applicability

As discussed on 6E1 380, a Focus must be defined as either Personal (usable only by the character who builds/purchases it) or Universal (usable by anyone). Most Foci, including mundane weapons, armor, and equipment, are Universal. Personal Foci tend to be relatively rare — things like enchanted items only the subject of prophecy can use, guns with high-tech fingerprint-reading systems in the grip, and so on.

Under the standard rules, choosing Personal or Universal doesn't affect the value of the *Focus* Limitation — the benefits of being the only character who can use a Focus are considered roughly equivalent to the potential benefit of letting a friend or ally use a Focus. However, the expanded Focus rules allow for more precise determination of effects.

These rules assume that all Foci are Universal by default. If a character wants to make a Focus Personal instead, that costs 3 FBPs.

FOCUS BUILDING
POINT COSTS

Total FBPs	Effect
20-24	1 less Limitation value (or more Advantage value)
15-19	¾ less Limitation value (or more Advantage value)
10-14	½ less Limitation value (or more Advantage value)
5-9	¼ less Limitation value (or more Advantage value)
-4 to 4	0 more Limitation value
-5 to -9	¼ more Limitation value
-10 to -14	½ more Limitation value
-15 to -19	¾ more Limitation value
-20 to -24	1 more Limitation value

...and so on



SELF-CONTROLLED FOCI

In *HERO System* terms, the standard way to build a device that functions independently of the character using it — such as a guided missile, Syzygy's attack orbs (CV3 278-80), or a set of steel tentacles (HSEG 183) — is to buy it as a Follower or Vehicle. That way it can use its abilities without the character having to control it directly (it has its own SPD, OCV, PER Roll, and so forth).

However, if you use the expanded Focus creation rules in this section, it's possible to create a "self-controlled" Focus without resorting to the Follower or Vehicle rules. This allows characters to build homing mini-missiles, artificially intelligent reconnaissance devices, and similar gadgets quickly and easily. This works by assigning Focus Building Point costs to the Characteristics such devices must have to function independently.

Self-controlled Foci begin with 0 in all Characteristics. The cost in FBPs to buy Characteristics for them equals one-tenth the cost in Character Points to buy it for a character (with a minimum cost of 1 FBP). For example, 1 SPD or 10 INT costs 1 FBP.

All self-controlled Foci must have, at a minimum, DEX, INT, OCV, and SPD. They can have other Characteristics (such as STR) if the GM permits. (For example, a gadget that needs to lift or carry things could have STR; or the GM might allow a character to give a Focus END and REC to represent its fuel or power source.) Instead of DCV they have a Target Size modifier based on the Focus size purchased for them. They also have the PD, ED, and BODY purchased for them according to the rules in this section.

Self-controlled Foci are assumed to have EGO 0 for purposes of being subjected to Mental Attacks that affect the Machine class of minds (unless the character pays to increase the Focus's EGO). They cannot make Presence attacks or engage in Social Combat, and are

likewise immune to both types of attack. They do not have STUN and cannot take STUN damage.

Self-controlled Foci have just one Sense, Normal Sight. Additional Senses cost FBPs — one-tenth what the Sense would cost in Character Points (see 6E1 209). They have a PER Roll based on their INT, plus any applicable modifiers, Enhanced Perception, and the like.

Self-controlled Foci may need powers or abilities besides Characteristics. The most common example is Movement Powers, but others are possible. These, too, have an FBP cost equal to one-tenth their cost in Character Points.

Once "activated," a self-controlled Foci requires its first Full Phase to "orient" itself. After that it acts normally according to its SPD, DEX, and abilities.

Example: *Ultratech decides to build a mini-missile that he can fire from his gauntlet. He defines it as an RKA 3d6, Area Of Effect (8m Radius Explosion; +¼), OAF (see below; +½) (79 Active Points); 1 Charge which Never Recovers (-4).*

Ultratech decides that the missile has 5 BODY (3 FBPs) and 4 PD, 4 ED (2 FBPs). It's about the size of a cigar, so Ultratech decides it has just a +1 Concealment modifier and a -10 OCV Target Size modifier (4 FBPs), and it weighs 0.032 kg (6 FBPs). He also buys it the following abilities: DEX 15 (3 FBPs), INT 20 (2 FBPs), OCV 6 (3 FBPs), SPD 6 (6 FBPs), and Flight 40m (4 FBPs). That's a total of 33 FBPs, which converts his OAF into a +½ Advantage.

That means his mini-missile has 79 Active Points and a final cost of 16 points, considerably more than it would have had under the standard Focus rules (which would have made it a 56 Active Point gadget with a Real Cost of 9 points). However, unlike a regular mini-missile, this one can move, seek out targets, and attack on its own, possibly many Phases after Ultratech fires it.

“Realness” Of A Focus

By default, Foci built using these rules aren’t “real.” They require little or no maintenance, and real-world considerations (like the substance a target’s built out of) generally don’t affect their performance. In game terms, they don’t have Limitations like *Real Weapon* (see 6E2 200-01) or *Real Armor* (see 6E2 210-12).

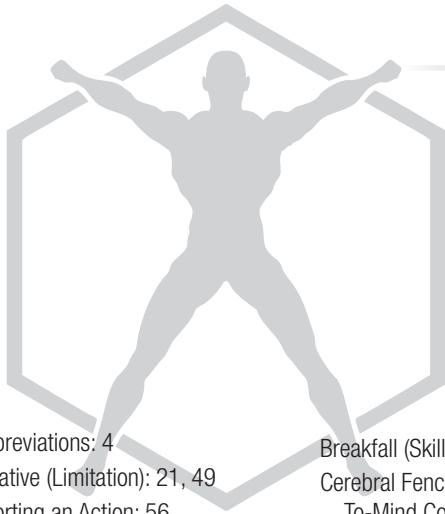
Making a Focus “real” — subject to the restrictions of Real Weapon, Real Armor, or some equivalent sort of Limitation — “costs” -5 FBPs (*i.e.*, it “saves” 5 FBPs).

Determining The Final Value Of Focus

After buying all the qualities and attributes he wants for a Focus, a character adds up the total Focus Building Points and consults the accompanying table to determine the results. A positive total may require the character to decrease the value of the *Focus* Limitation (or even change it to an Advantage); a negative total may increase the value of the *Focus* Limitation. (However, the GM may, in his discretion, cap the value of Focus at +0 Advantage, regardless of how many FBPs are spent.)



APPENDIX
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