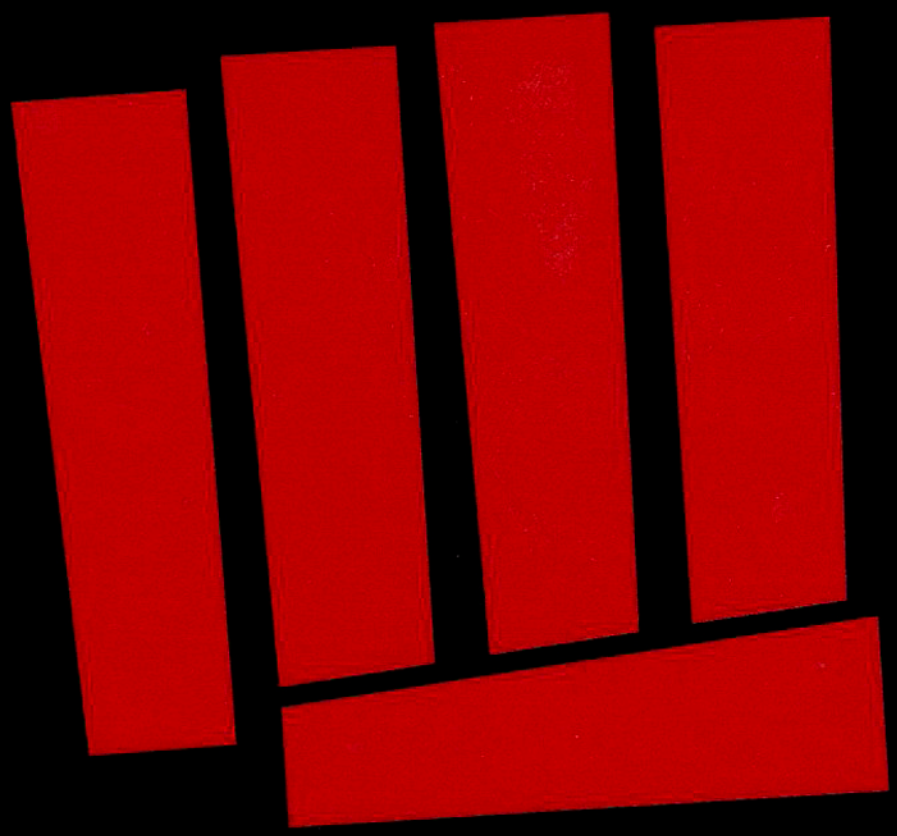
A sourcebook for HERO SYSTEM FIFTH EDITION

HERO SYSTEM COMBAT HANDBOOK



STEVEN S. LONG

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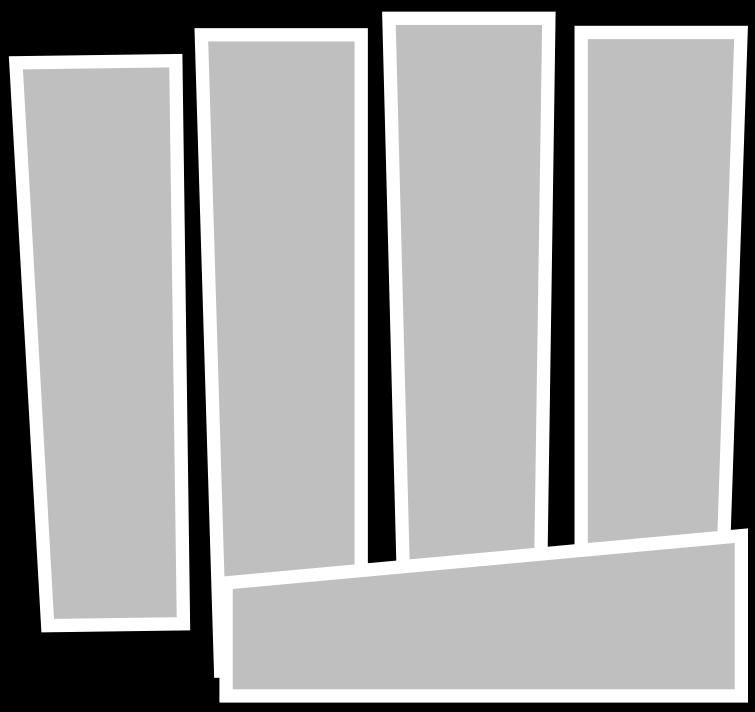

HERO SYSTEM COMBAT HANDBOOK

A Sourcebook for the *HERO System*

Author: Steven S. Long

Editing & Development: Allen Thomas

Layout & Graphic Design: Andy Mathews

Cover Illustration: Andy Mathews

Interior Illustration: Nate Barnes, Storn Cook, Robert Cram, Andrew Cremeans, Matthew Tito Cuenca, Keith Curtis, Jonathan Davenport, Louis Frank, John Grigni, Jeff Hebert, Bryce Nakawaga, Cara Mitten, Brad Nault, Eric Radamaker, Derrick Thomas, Erich Von Haus

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly every *HERO System* roleplaying campaign involves combat at some point — in fact, most adventures feature at least one fight every game session. Combat is dangerous, tense, and action-packed, so it's a great way to inject some excitement and drama into the game.

Given combat's importance in so many games, it's no surprise that the *HERO System* rules for combat cover a lot of ground. At their heart they're pretty straightforward and simple — but if you want, you can expand on that simplicity with expanded, optional, and variant rules to give your characters even more choices and opportunities in combat.

The HERO System Combat Handbook collects all the rules about personal combat from existing *5th Edition* books so that you can quickly and easily reference them. It starts with Chapter Two of the *5th Edition, Revised* core rulebook, then adds in all the additional information from books like *The Ultimate Martial Artist, Star Hero, Fantasy Hero, The Ultimate Brick,* and *Dark Champions,* and from other sources such as the online Rules FAQ file. In other words, most of the text of the *Combat Handbook* has been reprinted from other books, though some of the rules appear here in print for the first time. Where appropriate, page references have been changed to refer to the *5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. The chapters — *Entering Combat, Fighting, Combat And Martial Maneuvers, Damage And Its Effects, Other Combat Effects,* and *Environment And Genre* — present the material in the order it appears in Chapter Two of the core rulebook.

WHAT THIS BOOK DOESN'T CONTAIN

It's also important to note what this book *doesn't* contain.

First, it only covers personal combat. For expanded rules about combat involving vehicles, see *The Ultimate Vehicle;* for rules for mass combats, battles, and sieges, see *Fantasy Hero.*

Second, it doesn't cover weapons, armor, or other combat gear. For that, see various *HERO System* genre and setting books or *The HERO System Equipment Guide.*

Third, it doesn't include the rules for creating Martial Maneuvers, for Ranged Martial Arts, or for other subjects pertaining to martial arts. You can find that information in *The Ultimate Martial Artist.* Similarly, it doesn't have advanced or expanded rules for mental combat; those are in *The Ultimate Mentalist.*

ROLEPLAYING COMBAT

As you read through this book, remember not only the strategic aspects of the rules, but the roleplaying aspects as well. All too often players and GMs look at combat solely as an exercise in tactics, strategy, and power-gaming, but in fact it has a lot of roleplaying potential.

When running a fight, you can best realize this potential if you "talk out" your battles as much as possible. This simply means describing what your character does in real-world terms rather than just game terms. "I hit him with my Offensive Strike" is a lot less exciting than "I knock his shield out of position with my own shield, pivot to the right, and deliver a powerful slash right to his side!" Roleplaying combat is fun, adds an important dimension to the battle, and can even result in some tactical bonuses — such as when the GM likes a maneuver's description so much he awards a Surprise Move bonus to the character.

When describing attacks this way, you don't have to use Hit Location penalties. A player can say, "Okay, I shoot him in the head!" without taking a -8 OCV penalty. So long as the character doesn't receive the game benefits of hitting someone in the Head (x2 BODY, x2 NSTUN, and so forth), he doesn't suffer the penalties either. A "described shot" to the Head does ordinary damage, it's just portrayed that way to make the combat more enjoyable. Of course, if the character wants the extra damage for hitting his opponent in the Head, he can take the -8 OCV penalty for his attack in the usual way.

chapter one:

ENTERING COMBAT

BEFORE COMBAT

This chapter provides rules for running combats and similar encounters. Combat ranges from throwing a punch, to drawing and shooting a pistol, to casting a lightning bolt spell. The *HERO System* breaks combat down into several steps. The rules explain each step thoroughly, with examples to illustrate how you might conduct actual game combats.

The *HERO System* covers all types of combat with a set of simple rules. As you gain experience with these rules, there are optional rules you can use to make your combats more "realistic" and exciting. Add in optional rules when you feel more comfortable with the game and can deal with the added complexity. For the most part, the optional rules are better for Heroic games than Superheroic games.

COMBAT AND NONCOMBAT TIME

In the *HERO System* there are two types of time: combat and noncombat.

Combat time is very precise, measured second by second, with exact actions and results. Because so much can happen in only a few seconds of combat time, there are extensive rules for playing it out. It may take a couple of hours (real time) to play out a combat that's just a few seconds or a couple of minutes (game time) long. As you become more familiar with the rules and rhythm of the game, the combats you run will typically take less time.

Noncombat time, on the other hand, isn't as exact. This is when the GM sets the scene for the players, tells them what's happening to their characters, and begins the plot of the session's adventure. Hours, days, or weeks of game time can pass in a few minutes of real time as the GM describes what's happening. This tremendous variation in time is similar to what happens in movies and novels. In a novel, weeks may pass in one paragraph or sentence, or a whole chapter may describe a fight that lasts for a minute.

Think of a game session as the telling of a story with the help of the players. First, the GM describes where the characters are, either dealing with each one individually or starting with the group as a whole. As he describes the setting, the characters will probably want to do things. For example, the GM says, "Reynolds, you hear the high-pitched whine of a laser pistol shot. It sounds like it's right around the corner." The player, acting out the part of Reynolds, describes what he does in response: "I'll run around the corner to see what's happening." The GM shouldn't worry about exactly how far it is to the corner, or how long it takes Reynolds to get there, because this is still noncombat time. What's important to the adventure is that Reynolds gets to the corner, looks around, and sees an assassin shooting the ambassador.

Unless it looks like there's going to be a fight (or some other sequence you need to detail precisely, like a car chase), you don't have to be exact about things like time or distance. It's not really important to know exactly how long it takes Reynolds to eat his breakfast, drive to work, or talk to his boss. The GM starts the adventure by telling the characters their current locations and activities. After that, the adventure may include some investigation, conversation between the players and NPCs, or perhaps some mood-setting emotional scenes. All this happens in noncombat time.

Usually, the event that marks the change from noncombat to combat time is when the GM has the PCs make Perception Rolls to spot their enemies (or vice-versa).

SENSES IN THE HERO SYSTEM

Characters are constantly perceiving — seeing, hearing, and smelling the world around them. In some games, they may even have exotic Senses such as "x-ray vision" or the ability to detect magic. Here's how they use those Senses.

Perception Rolls

Characters aren't always aware of everything going on around them, especially during combat. Whenever something's obvious, the GM tells the character about it ("You see a '67 Chevy in front of you"). But he may require characters to make *Perception Rolls* (PER Rolls) to notice something inobvious, or to notice something during a combat or crisis situation. Every character's base PER Roll equals 9 plus his Intelligence divided by 5:

Perception Roll = (9 + (INT/5)) or less

For example, a character with INT 14 has a PER Roll of (9 + (14/5) =) 12 or less.

To make a PER Roll, the character should roll this number or less on 3d6. The GM should apply modifiers to this roll depending on the circumstances (see below).

THE RANGE OF SENSES

Many Senses can perceive things at a distance — in other words, they work at Range. For example, characters can see and hear things far away.

The *HERO System* rules don't establish any specific outer limit or boundary for a Ranged Sense. However, the Range Modifier (page 37) applies to all PER Rolls. In effect, this restricts the Range of a Sense significantly. However, the GM should also establish any other limits that seem appropriate based on common sense, dramatic sense, and considerations of game balance. For example, even if a character on Earth rolls a 3 on his Sight Group PER Roll, he can't see what's happening on Mars. As a guideline, when the Range Modifier reaches the point where it reduces a character's PER Roll to 0 or below, beyond the outer limit of that Range Modifier category things are too blurry, indistinct, or obscured for the character to perceive, even if he rolls a 3.

TARGETING AND NONTARGETING SENSES

Of course, not all Senses are equal — a normal human can learn a lot more about someone by looking at him than by smelling him. To reflect this difference, the *HERO System* divides all Senses into two categories: Targeting and Nontargeting.

A *Targeting Sense* is a Sense a character can use to determine the exact location of a target. For normal humans, Sight is the only Targeting Sense.

A *Nontargeting Sense* is one with which the character can, at best, sense the general location of a target. For normal humans, Hearing and Smell are Nontargeting Senses. Taste and Touch both have no range, so characters can't use them to locate targets at all (to use these Senses, the character would already have to have found his opponent).

Lack Of Senses In Combat

In combat, a character must normally use a Targeting Sense to detect his target. If he can do so, there is no change in his OCV or DCV, and combat proceeds normally.

However, characters can't always perceive their opponents with Targeting Senses. For example, a character may have been blinded by a Flash, or his opponent could be Invisible. When a character cannot perceive his opponent with any Targeting Sense, he suffers modifiers to his OCV and DCV:

—In *HTH Combat,* the character is at ½ OCV and ½ DCV. This applies both to when he makes attacks in HTH Combat, and is attacked in HTH Combat.

—In *Ranged Combat,* the character is at 0 OCV and ½ DCV. This applies both to when he makes attacks in Ranged Combat, and is attacked in Ranged Combat.

If a character can make a PER Roll with a Nontargeting Sense (a Half Phase Action) to perceive a particular target, then against that target only he is at -1 DCV, ½ OCV when attacked or attacking in HTH Combat, and full DCV, ½ OCV when attacked from or attacking at Range. Against all other targets he is affected by the standard "lack of Targeting Sense" modifiers described above. The benefits of making this roll last until the beginning of the character's next Phase; if he wants them to continue, he has to use another Half Phase Action and succeed with another PER Roll.

Example: *Orion, under attack by the supervillain team Eurostar, has been Flashed, and therefore can't see. He'd normally be at ½ DCV, ½ OCV in HTH Combat and ½ DCV, 0 OCV at Range — a sitting duck. However, he makes his Hearing PER Roll against Durak. He is now only -1 DCV, ½ OCV in HTH Combat and full DCV, ½ OCV at Range against Durak only. He's still at ½ OCV and DCV in HTH and ½ DCV, 0 OCV at Range against all other opponents.*

Moving While Blind

The *HERO System* rules have no specific penalties or restrictions for moving while a character is blinded (*i.e.,* unable to perceive his surroundings with a Targeting Sense). The the GM may impose any penalty he considers appropriate. A character could usually eliminate the penalty by moving slowly (1" per Phase as a Full Phase Action) — that way he can feel his way safely past anything he might trip over or bump into. If a character runs into a sufficiently large object, he may take Move Through damage based solely on his velocity (see *Collisions,* page 73).

Sense Groups

The *HERO System* divides Senses into seven Sense Groups: Hearing, Mental, Radio, Sight, Smell/Taste, Touch, and Unusual. The Senses with which a character is born, or that he later naturally develops, are considered Inherent. Other Senses, such as Infrared Perception bought as OAF Night-vision Goggles, are only Persistent (at best).

Although normal Senses, those which all humans possess, are not exactly "Powers" *per se,* you can derive a point value for one by determining the Physical Limitation value of not having it. For example, the Physical Limitation *Blindness* (lack of Sight Group Senses) affects a character All The Time and is Fully Impairing, so it's a 25-point Disadvantage. Therefore, Normal Sight as a "Power" is worth 25 points.

The Simulated Sense Group Rule

Characters in *HERO System* games often have unusual Senses bought using the *Enhanced Senses* Power (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 160). Many of these Senses (primarily those belonging to the Unusual Sense Group) are subject to the *Simulated Sense Rule.*

The Simulated Sense Rule is this: if one of a character's Senses is based on or "mimics" one of the standard Senses, that Sense is affected by Sense-Affecting Powers that affect the mimicked Sense's Sense Group *and* by any Sense-Affecting Powers that specifically target that Sense. It receives the Sense Modifiers (like Sense and Targeting) associated with that Sense Group for free. The rules usually refer to this as "assigning" a Sense to a particular Sense Group.

> **Example:** *Infrared Perception bought to represent a character's ability to see heat patterns is assigned to the Sight Sense Group — it "simulates" Sight. If the character's Sight Group Senses are Flashed, that Flash affects his Infrared Perception. On the other hand, his Infrared Perception automatically gains several Sense Modifiers (Discriminatory, Range, Sense, and Targeting) for free, because all Sight Group Senses have those Modifiers.*

This rule typically applies to the members of the Unusual Sense Group, Sense-like Talents, and so forth. For example, N-Ray Perception, Spatial Awareness, and many forms of Detect have the special effect of being "super-sensitive" or "super-powerful" versions of one of the standard Senses. N-Ray Perception could be a form of Sight powerful enough to see right through most objects. It would be affected by a Flash versus the Sight Group, or by a Flash versus N-Ray Perception specifically.

If a Sense is not defined as "belonging to" one of the standard Sense Groups, it can only be affected by Sense-Affecting Powers individually. For example, Combat Sense and Danger Sense both "stand alone" — they don't simulate any Sense Group, so only Sense-Affecting Powers specifically designed to affect them (such as with Darkness versus Combat Sense, Invisibility to Danger Sense, and so forth) work against them.

Because of the Simulated Sense Rule, characters cannot use Sense-Affecting Powers on the Unusual Sense Group as a whole. They must affect its Senses individually, or whatever Sense Group an Unusual Sense belongs to as a whole.

THE HEARING SENSE GROUP

The Hearing Sense Group includes Normal Hearing (which every character possesses unless he has an appropriate Physical Limitation) and any other Enhanced Senses based primarily upon hearing. Active Sonar and Ultrasonic Perception are almost always bought as part of the Hearing Sense Group.

The Hearing Sense Group provides the following Sense Modifiers: Discriminatory, Range, Sense. The Discriminatory effect provided by the Hearing Group is not the full Discriminatory obtained by buying that Sense Modifier, but rather an effect of somewhat cruder degree. For example, a character can tell a bird's song from a trumpet solo, but might not be able to tell two different types of bird songs apart. Characters can make Normal Hearing (or the entire Hearing Sense Group) fully Discriminatory by paying the usual cost. Although Normal Hearing has Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), the Hearing Sense Group does not provide this Sense Modifier to other Senses assigned to the group.

Normal Hearing is worth 20 Character Points as a Power. Lack of Hearing (deafness) is a 20-point Physical Limitation (All The Time, Greatly Impairing). Deafness means a character cannot make Hearing PER Rolls; lack of hearing in one ear (a 15-point Physical Limitation [Frequently, Greatly Impairing]) means Hearing PER Rolls are at -3.

THE MENTAL SENSE GROUP

The Mental Sense Group includes Mental Awareness, Mind Scan, and any other Enhanced Senses based primarily upon mental powers. To a limited extent, Telepathy (which acts as both "mental hearing" and a "mental voice") and Mind Link (a more limited form of Telepathy) are also a part of this Sense Group for purposes of applying Sense-Affecting Powers. No character has any Mental Group Senses normally, though characters who buy any Mental Power get Mental Awareness for free (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 163).

The Mental Sense Group provides the following Sense Modifiers: Range. Mental Awareness functions as a Sense, but the Mental Sense Group does not provide this Sense Modifier to other Senses assigned to the group.

Mental Awareness allows a character to perceive the user and target of Mental Powers, which are normally not perceivable (except to those two characters). Any character who has a Mental Power has Mental Awareness for free. If a character with Mental Powers does not have Mental Awareness for some reason, he may take this as a -¼ Limitation on the Powers, or as a 5-point Physical Limitation (since it only costs 5 points, that's all it's worth as a Disadvantage), as the GM prefers. Mental Awareness is not a

360-Degree Sense, Discriminatory, or a Targeting Sense. Discriminatory Mental Awareness would allow the character to determine (with a successful PER Roll) the specific Mental Power being used, the level of power (*i.e.,* Active Points, plus or minus 10%), and whether the power is being used grossly or subtly. Analyze with Mental Awareness allows the character to know the exact Active Points in the Power, and any Advantages bought for it.

THE RADIO SENSE GROUP

The Radio Sense Group includes Radio Perception and any other Enhanced Senses based primarily on radio. No character has any Radio Group Senses normally. High Range Radio Perception, Radar, and Radio Perception/Transmission are almost always bought as part of the Radio Sense Group.

The Radio Sense Group provides the following Sense Modifiers: Range, Sense. Radio Perception has Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), but the Radio Sense Group does not provide this Sense Modifier to other Senses assigned to the group. However, many of them buy it separately — HRRP, Radio Perception, and Radio Perception/Transmission all have it. Radar does not have it, but is a Targeting Sense.

THE SIGHT SENSE GROUP

The Sight Sense Group is the most important Sense Group and the one most often affected by Sense-Affecting Powers. It includes Normal Sight (which every character possesses unless he has an appropriate Physical Limitation), Nightvision, and any Enhanced Senses based primarily on sight. Infrared Perception, N-Ray Perception, and Ultraviolet Perception are almost always bought as part of the Sight Sense Group.

The Sight Sense Group provides the following Sense Modifiers: Discriminatory, Range, Sense, Targeting. The Discriminatory effect provided by the Sight Group is not the full Discriminatory obtained by buying that Sense Modifier, but rather an effect of somewhat cruder degree. For example, a character can tell two people apart based on their visual appearance, but cannot always determine a person's ethnicity or religion through Sight. Characters can make Normal Sight (or the entire Sight Sense Group) fully Discriminatory by paying the usual cost.

Normal Sight is worth 25 Character Points as a Power. Lack of Sight (blindness) is a 25-point Physical Limitation (All The Time, Fully Impairing) that has severe effects on a character. Not only can he not make Sight PER Rolls, but his CV may be reduced (see page 7). A character who's blind in one eye (and thus lacks depth perception) suffers no penalties in HTH Combat but is at ½ OCV in Ranged Combat (making this condition a 10-point Physical Limitation [Infrequently, Greatly Impairing] for many characters in most campaigns).

THE SMELL/TASTE SENSE GROUP

The Smell/Taste Sense Group includes Normal Smell and Normal Taste

(which every character possesses unless he has an appropriate Physical Limitation) and any Enhanced Senses based primarily on smell or taste.

The Smell/Taste Sense Group provides the following Sense Modifiers: Discriminatory, Range (Smell only), Sense. The Discriminatory effect provided by the Smell/Taste Group is not the full Discriminatory obtained by buying that Sense Modifier, but rather an effect of somewhat cruder degree. For example, a character can tell a steak from a potato by smell or taste, but can't necessarily identify every ingredient in either dish. Characters can make Normal Smell or Normal Taste (or the entire Smell/Taste Sense Group) fully Discriminatory by paying the usual cost.

Although Normal Smell has Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), the Smell/Taste Sense Group does not provide this Sense Modifier to other Senses assigned to the group. Normal Smell works at Range, and provides this effect to other Smell-based Senses; Normal Taste and Taste-based Senses do not have Range.

Normal Smell/Taste is worth 5 Character Points as a Power. Lack of smell/taste (no chemoreception) is a 5-point Physical Limitation (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing).

THE TOUCH SENSE GROUP

The Touch Sense Group includes Normal Touch (which every character possesses unless he has an appropriate Physical Limitation) and any Enhanced Senses based primarily on touch.

The Touch Sense Group provides the following Sense Modifiers: Discriminatory, Sense. The Discriminatory effect provided by the Touch Group is not the full Discriminatory obtained by buying that Sense Modifier, but rather an effect of somewhat cruder degree. For example, a character can tell a dollar bill from a piece of ordinary paper of the same size, but cannot tell a $1 bill from a $5 bill. Characters can make Normal Touch (or the entire Touch Sense Group) fully Discriminatory by paying the usual cost.

Normal Touch has Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), but the Touch Sense Group does not provide this Sense Modifier to other Senses assigned to the group. Normal Touch is not a Targeting Sense, but touching a target would allow the character to make a PER Roll with Normal Touch (a Nontargeting Sense) to reduce the standard penalty for not perceiving the target with a Targeting Sense.

Characters generally cannot make themselves Invisible to Touch; this is more or less the same thing as Desolidification and should be bought using that Power. Characters can, however, Flash the Touch Sense Group (with effects indicated below) or create Images that affect it (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 189).

Normal Touch is worth 15 Character Points as a Power. Lack of Normal Touch is a 15-point Physical Limitation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing). In game terms, a lack of Normal Touch (whether permanent or as the result of a Sense-Affecting Power) generally imposes penalties of -3 (or more) on DEX-Based Skills, OCV in HTH Combat (and even some Ranged combat, if the character has to, for example, shoot weapons), and any other activities requiring dexterous action. Lack of Touch does *not* render a character immune to pain or reduce the degree of damage he takes from attacks. He still takes full damage — he just doesn't feel it. Thus, the character may think he's perfectly uninjured and healthy, when in fact he's about to collapse due to system shock (STUN damage) or has suffered a life-threatening wound (BODY damage). However, at the GM's discretion, characters who lack Touch may receive bonuses to rolls to resist pain.

THE UNUSUAL SENSE GROUP

This Sense Group includes a hodgepodge of Senses that don't belong in any other group: Active Sonar, Clairsentience, Detect, Find Weakness, High Range Radio Perception, Infrared Perception, N-Ray Perception, Radar, Radio Perception/Transmission, Spatial Awareness, Sensory Talents, Ultraviolet Perception, Ultrasonic Perception, and any form of Detect that's not primarily based upon some other Sense Group.

The Unusual Sense "Group" really isn't a Sense Group in the normal meaning of the term — instead, it's a way of categorizing several odd Senses that don't fit in another Sense Group. Characters cannot buy Sense-Affecting Powers that affect the entire Unusual Sense Group (unless the GM permits this). Instead, the Simulated Sense Rule applies to the Senses in this group: they're affected by Sense-Affecting Powers that affect the Sense Group the character assigns them to.

Clairsentience

Clairsentience has several unique properties. Its focal point can be at any location within the Power's range, instead of just at the character himself (other Senses' focal points are the character's sensory organs). From that perception point the character uses the Sense in the standard fashion, and the Range Modifier applies.

Clairsentience is thus "Indirect" in some ways (since a character can project it "through" walls, around corners, and so forth). It can approximate Improved Arc Of Perception — the character can establish the perception point wherever he prefers within his range, including behind him, and sense in any direction from that perception point — but is not inherently a 360-Degree Sense. For a discussion of how Sense-Affecting Powers affect Clairsentience, refer to *Sense-Affecting Powers,* below.

For purposes of Sense-Affecting Powers, Precognitive Clairsentience and Retrocognitive Clairsentience should be considered separate from each other and from normal Clairsentience. Thus, a Flash versus Clairsentience affects a character's ordinary Clairvoyance or Clairaudience, but not his Precognition or Retrocognition; a Flash versus his Precognition won't affect his normal Clairsentience or Retrocognition. If a character has more than one form of Clairsentience (say, Clairvoyance and Clairaudience), it's the GM's decision, based on spe-

cial effects and logic, as to whether they're affected separately or together by Sense-Affecting Powers.

Characters can buy Clairsentience as a Targeting Sense. However, this can be extremely unbalancing in combat, since it allows characters to hide behind complete cover and still perceive their opponents. Therefore GMs should be very cautious about allowing any character to buy Clairsentience as a Targeting Sense. However, even if Clairsentience is Targeting, a character cannot establish LOS with it (unless the GM permits otherwise).

Detect

Detects allow the character to perceive virtually anything he can think of — enemies, minds, life force, gold, secret doors, starships, you name it. Typically a Detect is subject to the Simulated Sense Rule — for example, if a character has the ability to "smell" gold, his Detect Gold is part of his Smell/Taste Sense Group.

N-Ray Perception

N-Ray Perception allows characters to perceive through barriers and other solid objects, as appropriate. It could be a form of perception that can see through things, a sense of smell so powerful it can smell things through barriers, hearing so precise it can detect minute shifts in air currents that indicate what things are and where they're located, and the like — its definition is as broad as the player's imagination. But no matter how you define it, you must also define a reasonably common substance that blocks it (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 163).

Spatial Awareness

Spatial Awareness allows a character to perceive his surroundings without contacting them. This usually means he can perceive through barriers and other solid objects, as appropriate. Like N-Ray Perception, it's often defined as some sort of super-refined version of one of the ordinary senses, and thus is subject to the Simulated Sense Rule. Spatial Awareness does not operate in 360 Degrees and is not Discriminatory, but is a Targeting Sense. If Spatial Awareness is bought Discriminatory, it can sense fine details.

Even More Unusual Senses

This "category" includes several "Senses" that don't belong in any other group, not even the Unusual Sense Group. These Senses are covered by the Simulated Sense Rule.

Voice As A "Sense": A character cannot use his voice to "perceive" anything. However, since characters' voices are silenced by Darkness that affects the Hearing Group, the voice has some Sense-like aspects. Voice is worth 20 points as a Power.

Sense Talents: Several Talents are unusual types of Senses. See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 86 for further discussion.

Other Senses And Sense Groups

If he wishes, the GM can establish other "Sense Groups" based on common special effects. For example, all of a character's Senses that derive from his mystic powers might belong to a "Mystic Sense Group," which would then be subject to Sense-Affecting Powers directed against it.

The GM can also establish other Senses if he wishes to. For example, he could create "Mystic Awareness," which functions just like Mental Awareness regarding mystic or magical energies.

Perception Roll Modifiers

Like Skill Rolls, PER Rolls are subject to modifiers. Some of these modifiers are the same as those for Skills; others are different, or are specific to PER Rolls based on a given Sense.

SKILL MODIFIERS

As a general rule, GMs can apply the following types of Skill Modifiers to PER Rolls (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 45 for details): modifiers for Routine, Easy, Difficult, and so on; taking extra time; and excellent or poor conditions. Other such modifiers apply as the GM sees fit.

RANGE MODIFIER

Attempts to perceive things at a distance are subject to the Range Modifier. See page 37.

MODIFIERS FOR SPECIFIC SENSES

The accompanying Perception Modifier tables show modifiers for specific objects or conditions which affect those Senses. The GM should add up all of the modifiers; if the total is positive, then the character can probably perceive the object, substance, or phenomena without making a PER Roll. If the total is zero or negative, the character has to make a PER Roll with that modifier to perceive the subject.

If a character tries to perceive someone using Stealth, they compete in a Skill Versus Skill Contest. In essence, you subtract the amount the character makes his Stealth roll by from the other character's PER Roll. A failed Stealth roll does not automatically mean the character is perceived; if the other character fails his PER Roll, the Stealth still works, albeit barely.

These modifiers do not apply to a character's CV in combat; they apply only to PER Rolls. However, the GM may require characters to make PER Rolls every Phase in combat if it's difficult to see (or otherwise perceive) their opponents. Any character who fails a roll suffers the standard penalties for not being able to perceive his target with a Targeting Sense.

SIGHT PERCEPTION MODIFIERS

Situation	Modifier
Contrast	
Extremely high contrast (*e.g.,* a lighted object in darkness)	+5
Low contrast	-1
High contrast (*e.g.,* black object on white)	+1
Darkness and shadow	
Night	-2
Dark night	-4
Moving object	+1
Object size (large)	
Object fills entire hex	+2
2 hex object	+4
4 hex object	+6
8 hex object	+8
16 hex object	+10
32 hex object	+12
...and so forth	
Object size (small)	
¼ hex object	-2
1/8 object	-4
1/16 hex object	-6
1/32 hex object	-8
...and so forth	
Sight aids	
Binoculars	+2
Telescope	+3
Time spent looking	
Looking (Half Phase)	+1
Long look (Full Phase, ½ DCV)	+2

SMELL PERCEPTION MODIFIERS

Although the sense of Smell is technically Ranged (a character can smell something across the room), for humans it isn't as precise as either Sight or Hearing. Moreover, as the distance to the object increases, the chance to smell it decreases dramatically.

Characters can use their sense of Smell in combat, but only with great difficulty. Attempting to Smell an opponent is automatically a -5 to the PER Roll, along with normal penalties for range. (This does not apply if the character has bought Smell as a Targeting Sense.) Here are some additional modifiers:

Situation	Modifier
People	
Person	+0
Smelly person (unbathed or perfumed)	+2
Extremely smelly person	+4
Wind	
Downwind, light breeze	+1
Downwind, strong breeze	-1
Upwind, light breeze	-2
Upwind, strong breeze	-4
Miscellaneous	
Dung	+3
Gasoline	+3
Skunk	+5

HEARING PERCEPTION MODIFIERS

Situation	Modifier
Doors	
Open a door	+0
Slowly open a door (1 Phase)	-2
Slamming a door	+2
Echoes	
Generally	+3
Locating source of echoes	-3
The environment	
Downwind from noise	+1
Foggy weather	-1
High contrast sound	+1
Noisy area	-3
Quiet area	+3
Upwind from noise	-1
Movement	
Run (6"+)	+1
Fast walk (3")	+0
Normal walk (2")	-1
Careful walk (1")	-2
Time spent listening	
Listen (half Phase)	+1
Listen close (1 Phase, ½DCV)	+2
Vehicles	
Hovercar	+1
Spaceship taking off	+5
Truck	+3
Voices and like noises	
Loud conversation	+1
Shout	+2
Whisper	-3
Whistle	+3
Weapons	
Grenade	+6
Pistol	+3
Rifle	+5
Submachine gun	+4
Miscellaneous	
Body hitting ground	+0
Breaking glass	+1
Car alarm	+3
Parabolic microphone	+4
Punch	+0
Siren	+4
Sneeze	+1

Affecting And Using Senses

Here are some additional rules regarding how to use and affect Senses in the game.

ADJUSTMENT POWERS

In some situations, with the GM's permission characters can use Adjustment Powers (and Dispel) to affect Senses, provided those Senses are not Inherent (as most characters' natural Senses are). The effects vary depending upon the Power and the Sense, as described below.

Aid and Healing

Characters can Aid or Heal Senses. However, they cannot increase a Sense beyond its normal level of effect — to do that, characters have to buy Enhanced Senses.

Aiding a sense "heals" that Sense from being Flashed or Drained. This is referred to as, for example, "Aid versus Flash." Such a Power normally affects any sort of Flash, but at the GM's option characters may have to buy it versus Flash by Sense Group (such as Aid versus Sight Group Flash). Since Senses are not "Characteristics" or "special effects," an Adjustment Power that affects all Characteristics or Powers with a related special effect normally should not counteract Flashes.

To use Aid versus Flash, roll the Aid dice and count the Normal Damage BODY. Each "BODY" rolled "heals" 1 Segment of Flash effect for the duration of the Aid. If the "healing" effect equals or exceeds the number of Segments of Flash effect, the Sense is restored. But as always, Aid is not permanent, it only temporarily "boosts" a Sense. If the Aid wears off before the Flash effect does, the remaining Segments of Flash once again affect the character.

Healing versus Flash works the same as Aid versus Flash, with one exception: it's permanent. The Segments of Flash effect it removes are gone forever, thus allowing the victim of the Flash to recover from it more quickly (or instantly).

Example: *In Phase 3 Dr. Destroyer Flashes Nighthawk's Sight Group Senses with a 12 BODY Flash, so Nighthawk will be Flashed for 12 Segments. In Segment 7, The Medic arrives and uses his Healing versus Flash to restore Nighthawk's eyesight. Since 4 Segments passed since the Flash, the Flash only has 8 BODY currently in effect, and The Medic's Healing only has to roll 8 BODY or more to "heal" Nighthawk. If The Medic rolled only 2 BODY, Nighthawk will still be Flashed for 6 Segments. If The Medic had arrived in Segment 3, when the Flash had 12 BODY, he would have had to roll 12 BODY on his Healing dice to restore Nighthawk's eyesight fully.*

Aid and Healing versus Flash also work against Adjustment Powers used to affect a character's Senses. In this case the total rolled on the dice adds to the Sense's point total to counteract the effect of the Adjustment Power. For example, if a villain used Drain Sight Group to remove 15 points from a hero's Sight Group Senses, The Medic could use his Healing versus Flash to counteract the effect. If The Medic rolls 12 on his Healing dice, the hero gets 12 of the Drained points back, so he has only lost 3 points' worth of eyesight — not even enough to suffer a PER Roll penalty (see below).

Dispel

A character cannot Dispel a character's Inherent Senses — he must use Transform to permanently deprive a character of one of his innate Senses. However, a character could use Dispel to destroy gadgets that provide Senses, such as IR Goggles, or to Dispel non-innate Senses.

Drain And Suppress

With the GM's permission, characters can Drain or Suppress individual Senses (not Sense Groups) using the point costs for them listed above, provided they aren't Inherent. If the Drain/Suppress does not Drain all points in the sense, the Sense becomes less acute — the character suffers -2 to his PER Rolls with that Sense for every full 5 points Drained/Suppressed. If the Drain/Suppress equals or exceeds the points in the Sense, the character loses that Sense until the points are restored. Since this is similar to using Flash or Transform, some GMs may prefer to disallow it.

Transfer

A Sense can be Transferred from one character to another. This is another way to overcome the effects of a Flash. The Transfer is based on the points in the Sense, as detailed above.

CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Some Change Environment abilities can affect one or more Senses. For example, a character may be able to Change Environment to create a thick fog that obstructs Normal Sight. See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 135 for more information.

DARKNESS AND FLASH

Darkness (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 145) and Flash (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 176) are the two primary Sense-Affecting Powers. The notes that follow detail some aspects of these Powers.

Darkness Or Flash Versus Clairsentience

Darkness and Flash may work against Clairsentience in unusual ways, depending upon the special effects of the Clairsentience. For instance, a typical example of Clairsentience in a Fantasy setting is a coven of witches gathered around a cauldron whose waters display a scene several miles away (say, a group of knights on the march). The situation affects how Darkness and Flash work.

First, since the Clairsentience is defined as using the witches' eyesight to view a picture in a pool, if their eyesight is Flashed (or blinded by Darkness) the Clairsentience won't work. The Flash could take place at the cauldron itself (maybe an enemy of the coven snuck up on it and cast a "blinding spell" or something similar), or it could take place at the scene being viewed (if one of the knights sets off a Sight Group Flash for some

reason, the witches viewing it may be Flashed, since their perception point is exposed to the Flash).

Second, the *Clairsentience* Power itself could be Flashed or blotted out by Darkness. A Flash versus Clairsentience would have to be launched at the witches themselves, since they're the source of the power — a Flash versus Clairsentience at the scene being viewed won't affect them. However, a Darkness versus Clairsentience used either at the scene of the cauldron or the scene being viewed will prevent the spell from functioning properly, since it "blacks out" the area to Clairsentience.

Darkness And Flash Versus The Mental Sense Group

The Mental Sense Group is affected by Flash and Darkness somewhat differently than most other Sense Groups. This is because Mental Powers can be targeted two ways: through eyesight (or other Targeting Senses) or through Mind Scan.

A Darkness versus the Mental Sense Group prevents any use of Mental Awareness or Mind Scan by affected characters. It also prevents the use of Telepathy and Mind Link, since, like a Darkness versus Hearing, it affects both the "mental hearing" and the "mental voice" aspects of those Powers. However, if the victim has LOS to his target, he can still use Telepathy and Mind Link on that target, since they work either through a Mind Scan "circuit" or through LOS. Mind Scan itself does not work on an LOS basis, so it doesn't matter whether a character in a Mental Sense Group Darkness field can see his target — the Mind Scan is effectively "blacked out."

A Flash versus the Mental Sense Group is another story. It also blocks Mental Awareness and Mind Scan, but it only Flashes the "mental hearing" aspect of Telepathy and Mind Link. The "mental voice" aspect of those Powers still functions (similarly, a character suffering from a Hearing Group Flash can still talk). Since Mind Scan is Flashed, Telepathy and Mind Link can only be targeted through LOS. The character cannot read the thoughts of anyone he can establish LOS on — his "mental hearing" has been "deafened" — but he can send his thoughts to other persons. If he already has a Mind Link established when the Flash goes off, the "mental voice" aspects continue to function, but the "mental hearing" aspects are cut off.

Additionally, characters can affect Mental Powers with Sense-Affecting Powers that affect the Sight Group (or any other Sense Group that contains Targeting Senses used to establish LOS). If a character does not have Mind Scan and his Sight is blocked by Darkness or Flash, he is effectively unable to use his Mental Powers. If any mental effects are in existence when the Darkness or Flash is used against him, such as Mental Illusions or Mind Control, his control over those powers is cut off, but they remain in effect at whatever level they were when cut off and deteriorate as per the rules from then on.

SENSES AND ADVANTAGES

Normally characters should not apply Advantages to Senses or Sense Groups. For example, a character should not buy *Indirect* for his Normal Sight so he can see through walls; he should buy a Limited form of N-Ray Perception or Clairsentience. However, characters can apply some Advantages, such as MegaScale, to a character's Senses or Sense Groups with the GM's permission.

ENTERING COMBAT

Once the GM decides to begin combat, such matters as scale and time become very important. Reasonably precise measurement of these things makes game play easier. This section explains how combat scale and time works in the *HERO System.*

DRAMATIC VERSUS REALISTIC COMBAT

The GM, after seeking input from the players, should decide whether he wants the combat in his game to emphasize *realism* or *drama.* The two aren't mutually exclusive, of course, but they do tend to have some strong differences. Some genres favor drama; others, such as some Military Action, often hew more toward "realism."

"Realistic" combat pays attention to realistic details about combat and makes an effort to simulate them in the game, either to increase verisimilitude or make combat a less attractive option for PCs (sometimes both). Although there's considerable debate (even among learned scholars) as to what is or is not "realistic" when it comes to simulating gunfire, explosions, and the like, typically realistic game combat does at least some or all of the following: uses all the optional damage rules (such as Bleeding); discourages most fancy "stunts" and maneuvers by imposing harsh CV penalties for performing them; restricts the effectiveness of most body armor.

"Dramatic" combat, on the other hand, tends to take its cues from action movies. The emphasis is less on a "realistic" depiction of armed combat than on running an enjoyable battle that maximizes the scope of the characters' options and the usefulness of their many abilities. Of course, different levels of "dramatic" can exist; one campaign might allow just about any sort of hair-raising, swashbuckling stunt, while another simply ignores the more annoying or time-consuming "realistic" rules to speed game play. In contrast to "realistic" games, dramatic games tend to use fewer optional damage rules (sometimes none except for Hit Locations), encourage stunts and clever maneuvers by granting bonuses (or at least imposing no penalties), and don't worry about making all the equipment function "realistically."

The degree to which the GM emphasizes "realism" or "drama" does a lot to provide flavor and feel for the campaign, and it influences character design as well. In a realistic game, players have to give some thought to how their characters cope with the nature and effects of combat, which may mean buying more CON or BODY to withstand injury, or more END so they can fight longer. In a dramatic game, players often design characters with special fighting styles and other unusual abilities to take advantage of the more "free-form" concept of battle.

The *HERO System* rules already handle the dramatic side of combat pretty well; that's part of the nature of the system. Many of the optional and additional rules in this chapter lean more toward "realism" than drama.

GAME SCALE

Combats are often run without a map or board, using only the GM's and players' imagination to keep track of who is where and how far away they are from prominent objects. This is easy for short combats, or when several characters fight a single opponent.

For larger or more intricate combat situations, the GM may want to use a floor or tabletop and some miniatures or other markers for the characters — "mapping" a *HERO System* combat is not necessary, but you may find it helpful and fun. The GM can lay out exactly where each character is in relation to the surroundings and the other characters.

Whenever the *HERO System* rules refer to an "inch," this represents 2 meters (approximately 6.5 feet) in the game setting (thus, 1" = 2m). Maps published with *HERO System* games use a hex-shaped grid to mark off the inches. If you're using such a map, each hex is 1" wide. This scale allows the GM and player to use 25 mm (1/72 scale) miniatures to represent characters.

One game inch = 2 meters = 6.5 feet

When you count hexes, the hex a character stands in is "0" (in other words, you don't count it). The hex counted as "1" is the hex adjacent to his, and so on until you reach the target. The hex the target stands in is counted.

COMBAT TIME

A battle can end quickly if the opponents are unequal, but a fair fight usually lasts much longer. The *HERO System* rules divide combat time into small units so you can easily keep track of what's going on. There are three separate time increments: Turn, Segment, and Phase.

TURN

The basic time frame of combat is called a *Turn.* Each Turn equals 12 seconds of time. Each Turn a character gets a number of Phases equal to his Speed (see below). A Turn is divided into 12 Segments.

SEGMENT

A Turn consists of 12 *Segments,* each 1 second long. Characters who can perform an Action in a Segment (*i.e.,* who have a Phase in that Segment) do so in order of their DEX values. The character with the highest DEX score goes first, the second highest goes next, and so on. Two or more characters with the same DEX who act in the same Segment should each roll 1d6; the one with the highest roll acts first. Ties should roll again.

After every Segment 12, before the next Turn begins, there is a "Post-Segment 12" period that takes no time. At this time most characters automatically get to take a Recovery (see page 142).

PHASE

A Segment on which a character can act is known as one of his *Phases.* Each character has a number of Phases in each Turn equal to his SPD. For instance, a Speed 5 character has five Phases; the character can perform one or more Actions in each Phase. The Speed Chart tells you which Segments a character's Phases are in.

Each time one of a character's Phases comes up, he may perform one or more Actions. Find the character's Speed on the left side of the Speed Chart, and look at the row next to it. Every Segment marked with an "X" in that column is a Segment in which the character has a Phase. For instance, a character with a SPD of 4 has Phases in Segments 3, 6, 9, and 12.

A character's Phase begins on his DEX in each of the indicated Segments. For example, if a character has SPD 5, DEX 20, his first Phase in a Turn begins in Segment 3 on DEX 20. Typically the GM begins each Segment by counting down DEXs, from highest to lowest, until there's no one left who has a Phase. *HERO System* gamers typically refer to this as having a character's DEX "come up" or "occur," or as a character "going on" his DEX ("My character goes on DEX 21").

The type of Actions a character performs have no effect on when he acts. A character gets to perform his entire Phase's worth of Actions when his Phase occurs, even if a character with a lower DEX only wants to perform a Zero or Half Phase Action.

Example: *Steve is running a Dark Champions campaign with player characters including Blade (DEX 20) and Knockout (DEX 14). Since the highest DEX in the campaign is 25, Steve always starts his DEX count at 25. "DEX 25, 24, 23, 22, 21, 20... okay, Blade, it's your Phase, what do you do?". Blade gets his entire Action now (unless he chooses to Hold).*

After Blade's Phase is resolved, Steve continues the count: "DEX 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14... okay, Knockout, it's your Phase." Knockout gets her entire action now (unless she chooses to Hold) — even if she only wants to perform a Zero Phase Action, she doesn't get to act before Blade, because his DEX is higher.

In non-combat situations, everyone is assumed to act at SPD 2 at all times, unless the circumstances require them to use their full SPDs.

In a combat featuring many characters, GMs may wish to ignore the SPD Chart to make combat go more quickly and smoothly. Simply allow each character to act once per "combat round."

THE SPEED CHART

Character's Speed	Segments 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	–	–	–	–	–	–	X	–	–	–	–	–
2	–	–	–	–	–	X	–	–	–	–	–	X
3	–	–	–	X	–	–	–	X	–	–	–	X
4	–	–	X	–	–	X	–	–	X	–	–	X
5	–	–	X	–	X	–	–	X	–	X	–	X
6	–	X	–	X	–	X	–	X	–	X	–	X
7	–	X	–	X	–	X	X	–	X	–	X	X
8	–	X	X	–	X	X	–	X	X	–	X	X
9	–	X	X	X	–	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
10	–	X	X	X	X	X	–	X	X	X	X	X
11	–	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

CHANGING SPEED

A character who wants to use a lower SPD can decide to lower his SPD in the Post-Segment 12 period. Normally, lowering SPD in a Segment requires use of an Adjustment Power such as Drain. Similarly, a character cannot return to his normal SPD after voluntarily reducing it until Post-Segment 12. Characters cannot lower their SPDs to lower than SPD 2 without GM permission.

Example: *Nighthawk is thrown into a river in Segment 8 and starts to drown. He decides to reduce his SPD to 2 so he can survive long enough for help to arrive. To do this, he must wait until the end of the Turn (Post-Segment 12). In the next Turn, he will be SPD 2 until he decides to return to his normal SPD (this must happen on a Post-Segment 12 also).*

These rules also apply to raising SPD through means other than Adjustment Powers; Adjustment Powers use the optional rule described below.

Optional Speed Change

If you want to allow a character to lower or raise his SPD during a Turn, without waiting for Post-Segment 12, use the following optional system.

SPEED QUICK-REFERENCE TABLE

If Your SPD Is	You Have Phases In Segments
1	7
2	6, 12
3	4, 8, 12
4	3, 6, 9, 12
5	3, 5, 8, 10, 12
6	2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
7	2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
8	2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12
9	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12
10	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
11	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
12	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

It's more complex, but lets characters with Powers like Multiform use their abilities to the fullest. Furthermore, you should always use this system when SPD is altered with Adjustment Powers.

Under this system, a character can change his SPD in any of his Phases. Changing SPD is a Zero Phase Action. After he has changed his SPD, a character cannot act (though he may Abort; see below) until the next Segment that's a Phase for *both* of the SPDs. Once he has taken an Action at the new SPD, he is at that SPD for the rest of the Turn.

Example: *Storvak is in his humanoid form (SPD 3). On Segment 4, he has a Phase, and decides to change into his cheetah form (SPD 5). He can now only act when he reaches a Segment that's a Phase for both of his SPDs. SPD 5 gives Storvak a Phase on Segment 5, but because SPD 3 does not also give him a Phase in Segment 5, he cannot take an Action — he must wait until Segment 8, when both SPD 3 and SPD 5 provide Phases, to act. Thereafter he acts on SPD 5's Phases.*

If you use these rules, a character cannot temporarily choose to act at a lower SPD so he can act again sooner. His choices are to stay with his current SPD, or use the full amount of the SPD he changes to. But the GM may choose to allow a character to act at a lower SPD if he prefers.

Time Chart

Many Powers, Power Modifiers, Skills, and Actions involve greater amounts of time than are used for combat. The Time Chart (see sidebar) indicates the different time increments used both in and out of combat.

BEGINNING COMBAT

Unless the GM rules otherwise, combat always begins on Segment 12. This gives everyone a chance to act and then take a Post-Segment 12 Recovery (see page 142). If combat begins with a Surprise attack, the targets don't get to act on Segment 12 — the attackers get a free Phase.

As in any other Segment, the character with the highest DEX goes first in Segment 12, and the GM then counts down the DEXs until there's no one left who has a Phase.

Actions

As discussed above, a Phase is a Segment in which a character can act, *i.e.,* perform an *Action.* During a Phase, a character may perform one or more Actions, depending upon the nature of those Actions and the order in which he performs them.

There are four basic types of Actions:

FULL PHASE ACTIONS

The first are *Full Phase Actions.* Full Phase Actions take a character's entire Phase; he can do nothing else and take no other Actions that Phase (though he could still make a Presence Attack or perform any other Action that takes no time). Examples of Full Phase Actions include a character using more than half of his inches of movement (a "Full Move"), taking a Recovery, using the *Rapid Fire* or *Sweep* Combat Maneuvers, recovering from being Stunned, or changing a Clip.

HALF PHASE ACTIONS

Second are *Half Phase Actions.* These are Actions that only require half a Phase to perform (in other words, a character can perform two Half Phase Actions per Phase). Half Phase Actions include a character using up to half of his inches of movement (a "Half Move"), opening a door, using the Power *Find Weakness,* or making most PER Rolls or Skill Rolls (though the time on the latter can vary, depending upon the Skill used and the circumstances).

A character cannot "combine" two Half Phase Actions into one. For example, he can't get to his feet and make a Half Move all as a single Half Phase Action.

ZERO PHASE ACTIONS

Third are *Zero Phase Actions.* A character may perform as many Zero Phase Actions as he wishes at the beginning of a Phase or after performing a Half Phase Action, but not after performing an Attack Action or a Full Phase Action. Shifting

TIME CHART

Time Period/Duration

1 Segment
1 Phase
1 Turn (Post-Segment 12)
1 Minute
5 Minutes
20 Minutes
1 Hour
6 Hours
1 Day
1 Week
1 Month
1 Season (3 months)
1 Year
5 Years
25 Years
1 Century

OPTIONAL TIME INTERVALS

The intervals on the standard Time Chart were chosen for ease of memorization. Each increment is three to seven times the length of the preceding increment, and most are represented by either one or five time periods.

If the GM wishes to use a more mathematically regular (but harder to remember) series, each increment is five times the length of the preceding increment, leading to the following time increments: 1 Segment, 1 Phase, 1 Turn, 1 Minute, 5 Minutes, 25 Minutes, 2 Hours, 10 Hours, 2 Days, 10 Days, and so on.

Combat Skill Levels, Penalty Skill Levels, or Skill Levels is a Zero Phase Action; the Levels' setting lasts until the character changes them (which he can only do during a Phase, or when Aborting). Other Zero Phase Actions include activating a Power, turning off a Power, shifting the points in a Power Framework, or using Casual STR.

ACTIONS WHICH TAKE NO TIME

Fourth are *Actions which take no time.* As the term implies, these Actions take no time to perform; a character may perform them whenever he wishes and as often as he wishes. For instance, a character could perform an Action that takes no time on a Segment when he doesn't have a Phase, after performing a Full Phase Action, in the middle of attacking, before making an attack, after making an attack, or the like. Examples including making a Presence Attack, making a soliloquy, or making a roll at the GM's request.

ATTACK ACTIONS

Attack Actions — Actions that require or involve any kind of Attack Roll, such as using Mind Control, using a Combat Maneuver, projecting an Energy Blast, Dodging, Blocking, or throwing a punch — are a special case. Attack Actions only take a Half Phase, but must be the last action the character performs in the Phase. For example, a character can Half Move and then attack, but can't attack and then Half Move. Performing an Attack Action brings a character's Phase to an end — he can perform no other Actions after performing an Attack Action.

A character can turn on (activate) or off (deactivate) a Power or ability at the beginning of his Phase or after he's performed his first Half Phase Action, but not at any other time unless noted otherwise (such as Aborting to activate a defensive Power).

If a character performs a Combat Maneuver or other maneuver that modifies his OCV, DCV, damage done, or other factors, any modifiers from the Maneuver remain in effect from when the character performs the Maneuver until the beginning of his next Phase. Thus, a SPD 3 character who Dodges on his Phase in Segment 4 retains the Maneuver's +3 DCV bonus until the beginning of his next Phase in Segment 8.

Multiple-Power Attacks

A character may use as many Attack Powers (or other attacks) in a Phase as he wishes, provided he meets several restrictions.

First, he must be able to pay the END for all of the Powers.

Second, he can only make one Attack Roll. It must be the same type of Attack Roll; a character can't use a Power requiring a DEX-based Attack Roll together with one requiring an ECV Attack Roll, except with the GM's permission. A character could use an area-affecting attack (which works against DCV 3) and a non-area-affecting one (which works against the target's DCV) as part of a multiple-power attack, but he must make the Attack Roll against the target's DCV for the non-area-affecting attack (in other words, not against the DCV 3 for the area-affecting attack). The attacks can affect different defenses (such as an Energy Blast and an RKA, or a Drain and a Flash).

Third, he must use all of the Attack Powers or attacks on the same target. Use of multiple powers in this fashion is considered a single Attack Action.

Example: *Defender has an Energy Blast slot in his Multipower and a Sight Group Flash (bought separately, outside his Multipower). Defender may attack with both Powers in the same Phase (assuming he has enough END to pay for both). He may only make one Attack Roll, however; if he misses, both Powers miss. He may not use the Energy Blast on one target and the Flash on another; he must use both against the same target.*

Characters should not combine Ranged and non-Ranged attacks into a multiple-power attack (unless the GM permits this); the attacks should both be Ranged or non-Ranged. Off Hand penalties do not apply to multiple-power attacks even if the special effect of the attack is that the character fires an attack from each hand, fights with two weapons, or the like. The overall attack is considered to be made with the character's good hand.

Characters can use slots from two or more different Power Frameworks to perform a multiple-power

attack, assuming they obey all the rules for such attacks. For example, a character could combine his Flame Blast (Energy Blast 8d6, bought as a slot in a Multipower) with his Firebolt (RKA 2d6, bought as a slot in an Elemental Control) into a multiple-power attack. Characters can also make multiple-power attacks with a slot in a Power Framework and a power that's not in any Framework. However, a character may not combine two or more slots from a single Power Framework as part of a multiple-power attack, even if he has sufficient reserve or base points to use both slots at once.

Characters cannot use defensive maneuvers or actions (such as Block or Missile Deflection) as part of a multiple-power attack. Nor can they make a multiple-power "attack" that consists of nothing but defensive actions.

USING MULTIPLE-POWER ATTACKS

When a multiple-power attack succeeds, the target applies his defenses (if any) separately to each part of the attack. The damage from the attack does not add together for purposes of determining if the target is Stunned. Moreover, if one of the attacks reduces or affects the target's defenses or CV (for example, a Drain PD or a Flash), the other attack applies first.

To determine the Knockback caused by a multiple-power attack, determine the Knockback for each attack used, and then apply only the best result. For example, if a character uses an Energy Blast and an RKA in a multiple-power attack, and one did 6" Knockback and the other 3" Knockback, the target takes 6" Knockback.

A character can only Spread a multiple-Power attack if he can Spread all the powers used in the attack. He must Spread both of them equally, and though the Spreading reduces both powers' DCs, he only gets one OCV bonus. For example, if a character has an Energy Blast and an RKA, he can reduce both by 3 DCs to obtain +3 OCV with them in a multiple-Power attack (he only gets +3, not +6).

Characters can make multiple-power attacks involving Combat Maneuvers that work at Range, including Ranged Martial Maneuvers from *The Ultimate Martial Artist.* However, all standard rules for multiple-power attacks apply (for example, he must use two "distinct" attacks and must accept the worst OCV and DCV modifiers of all the Maneuvers involved).

Different Powers

A character cannot use the same power, ability, or weapon to attack more than once per Phase with a multiple-power attack — that requires two (or more) distinct attacks. To attack multiple times with the same power, ability, or weapon, a character should buy *Autofire* for that ability or use the Combat Maneuvers *Sweep* or *Rapid Fire.*

When characters engage in weapons combat, use Martial Maneuvers, and the like, attacks based on or using STR count as "distinct attacks" for purposes of making multiple-power attacks *provided* their effects are reasonably distinguishable. A Maneuver that causes damage (such as Legsweep) is reasonably distinguishable from one that provides extra STR for a specific purpose (such as Martial Disarm) in most instances. Two Maneuvers that simply cause damage (Strike and Martial Strike, for example) generally are not, but the GM determines this based on the character, the situation, and other factors. If a character wants to hit a single target multiple times with the same, or two similar, damage-causing Maneuvers or attacks (like Martial Strike and Defensive Strike), usually he should choose one of the maneuvers and use a Sweep (or Rapid Fire, for Ranged attacks). Multiple-power attacks work best when characters combine two different forms of attack to generate an interesting effect, not when they simply lump two attack abilities together to cause more damage.

At the GM's option, if a character wants to fight with a melee weapon in each hand, he may do so as a multiple-power attack, even though that involves using two similar (perhaps identical) attacks that both do damage with STR. (The same applies to using two Ranged weapons, such as two pistols or two thrown daggers.)

Combat Skill Levels; Extra DCs

A character may not apply any Combat Skill Levels to improve his OCV or DCV with a multiple-power attack unless he could apply the CSLs to any of the attacks individually. To use the above example, if Defender has some 2-point CSLs with his Energy Blast, he cannot use them when making a multiple-power attack with his Energy Blast and Flash. However, if he had some 3-point CSLs usable with his EB, Flash, and Entangle, or 5-point CSLs with Ranged Combat, he could apply those. Similarly, a character may not use a Combat Maneuver with a multiple-power attack unless he could use that Maneuver with any of the attacks individually.

If a character has Combat Skill Levels he can apply to a multiple-power attack, and he uses them to increase the attack's damage, the increase affects all attacks that are a part of the multiple-power attack.

Extra DCs bought for Martial Maneuvers increase the effects of all Martial Maneuvers used in a multiple-Power attack. They do not apply to non-Martial Maneuvers used as part of that attack.

Combat Value Modifiers; Adding STR

A character may make a multiple-power attack with Powers, Combat or Martial Maneuvers, weapons, or other forms of attack that provide OCV or DCV modifiers. In this case, the character uses the *worst* of the modifiers (*i.e.,* the ones that hinder him the most, or help him the least). For example, suppose a character wants to perform a Martial Disarm (-1 OCV, +1 DCV) and a Legsweep (+2 OCV, -1 DCV) against a target as a multiple-power attack. The character's Attack Roll is at -1 OCV, and he is at -1 DCV — the worst OCV modifier and DCV modifier from the two maneuvers.

If both attacks used in a multiple-power attack involve adding STR to the damage (such as HA and HKA), the character may add his full STR to both attacks. Similarly, if a character uses velocity to add damage to his multiple-power attack, the velocity adds its full effect to both attacks.

RESTRICTING MULTIPLE-POWER ATTACKS

To prevent characters from over-using multiple-power attacks, the GM can impose restrictions similar to those on Rapid Fire and Sweep: for each power or maneuver added to the combination (including the first one) the character suffers a -2 OCV penalty; multiple-power attacks take a Full Phase; using one halves the character's DCV.

Since Linked (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 299) depends in part on the multiple-power attack rules, if the GM restricts them, he may want to consider increasing the value of Linked to reflect that.

DYNAMIC COMBAT

When characters make DEX Rolls to determine who acts first, keep in mind that the combat rules model a dynamic situation. They break a battle down into discrete steps for game management purposes, but from the point of view of "visualizing" the fight or providing a dramatic explanation for what a die roll signifies, everything's happening at once. It's not as if the combatants line up on the battlefield, then the character with the highest DEX performs all his Actions while his lower-DEX opponent stands there like a statue, then the lower-DEX character takes his Actions while the higher-DEX character stands around. Everything happens simultaneously — it just has to be broken down into discrete, ordered steps for game purposes.

Combat Maneuvers

With the GM's permission, a character can use a Combat or Martial Maneuver to perform a multiple-power attack, but only if that Maneuver could be used with either attack individually. In this case, the character gets the full OCV and DCV modifiers from that Maneuver. If the Maneuver adds damage, it only adds damage to one of the powers in the attack, not both. If the character's already adding STR, such as to an HA or HKA that's part of the multiple-power attack, he cannot also add STR to the Maneuver before applying it — it simply adds its extra dice of damage to the overall effect.

OTHER RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

Multiple-power attacks are Missile Deflected, Dodged, or Blocked as one attack. They are affected by Absorption as two separate attacks, however.

At the GM's option, characters may make multiple-power attacks with some non-Attack Powers. For example, a character might be allowed to use his Weather Alteration ability (Change Environment) together with his Lightning Bolt (RKA) to create a "storm" effect, or he could combine Darkness with an Area Of Effect Ego Attack to create a "mind-numbing shadow field." However, characters cannot use a Presence Attack as part of a multiple-Power attack — but since a Presence Attack takes no time, any character can perform one after attacking anyway.

The GM may, in his discretion, rule that characters cannot use certain attacks in multiple-power attacks, based on the attacks' respective Advantages, Limitations, special effects, or other factors. For example, he might forbid a character to use a fire power and ice power at the same time, combine a Power with the *Autofire* Advantage with a Power lacking that Advantage, or use a Power that does No Knockback together with one that does normal Knockback. If attacks have Power Modifiers that are mutually exclusive — such as Concentration, Gestures, or Incantations, each of which prevents the simultaneous use of other Powers with the same Limitation — those attacks may not be combined into a multiple-power attack.

Autofire, Rapid Fire, And Sweep

Characters can perform multiple-power attacks with Autofire attacks with the GM's permission, but some special rules apply. If a character finds two sufficiently distinct Combat or Martial Maneuvers that work at Range to use with an Autofire weapon/ability in a multiple-power attack, a Maneuver that increases the attack's damage would increase the damage of each Autofired shot that hits. Each Autofired shot that hits would also have the other distinct effect (say, a Disarm).

A character cannot Rapid Fire or Sweep with a multiple-power attack unless the GM permits him to.

Who Goes First?

If there's some question as to the exact timing of Actions (for example, a character is trying to Desolidify when someone's trying to hit him), the GM should resolve the situation by having both characters make DEX Rolls. The character who makes his DEX Roll by the most gets to act first; if both characters make the roll by the same amount, the Actions go off simultaneously. Sometimes this means a character gets hit just before he manages to use a Defense Power or take a defensive Action, but *c'est la guerre.* A character can Abort to a defensive Action (see below) to guarantee that it takes effect before he gets hit (similarly, a Held defensive Action always takes place before an attack; see below).

Alternately, the GM may dispense with the DEX Roll (perhaps as a way of speeding up combat) and allow one of the characters to go first based on their respective abilities. Two possibilities include: the character with the highest INT acts first (if their INTs are also tied, use PRE); or the character with Fast Draw acts first (if both have Fast Draw, the one with the highest roll acts first).

Consequences Of Losing The DEX Roll

If two characters use DEX Rolls to determine who acts first, the loser of the roll cannot then choose to Abort to a defensive Action — committing to the roll means the chance to Abort is lost. The character has staked his chances on getting to act first, and having failed to do so, has to live with the consequences. In some cases, the GM may even want the characters to specify what Actions they're attempting, and what powers or attacks they're using, before letting them make their DEX Rolls. The losing character has already stated, in effect, (a) that he's attacking, (b) what attack he's using, and (c) where he's aiming. He can't change just because the winner got lucky, saw it coming, and moved away. However, the losing character can, if hit, declare that he's Rolling With The Punch (if appropriate).

Similarly, if a character loses a DEX Roll Contest to determine who acts first, and the target of his attack moves out of the original hex he was in, the character cannot "re-target" his attack to "track" the target and still hit him.

Holding An Action

A character may choose not to act when his DEX indicates that his Phase begins. He may wait until a lower DEX or until some event occurs ("I wait until he strikes"; "I wait until he comes around the corner"). This is known as *Holding an Action* (or delaying or reserving a Phase).

A character may Hold his Action until a later DEX in one of his Phases or until a later Segment. However, he can never use a Held Action to take two Actions in one Segment — he loses any Held Action when the next Segment in which he has a Phase begins, because he can only have one Phase at a time. (The GM may, if he wishes, let a character Hold his Action until his next Phase begins, but if he chooses to use the Held Action before his Phase occurs, it takes the place of his Phase — he cannot have two Phases in the same Segment.) A character who waits a whole Turn without taking an Action still has only one Phase saved.

A character may perform a Half Phase Action and then Hold a Half Phase. The character is considered "ready" and may perform the Held Half Phase Action later.

Typically, a character must either Hold his Action until a specified lower DEX, or to wait for a specified event (such as "I'll wait until he looks at me" or "I'll Dodge if anyone attacks me"). In the latter case, once the specified event occurs, the character may choose not to use his Held Action, and keep Holding it. With the GM's permission, a character can Hold his Action "generically," without declaring any sort of precondition for acting, and then may perform whatever Action he wants to whenever he wants to.

A character can usually use a Held Action (or Half Phase Action) at any time (unless the specified precondition for acting would prevent this). If two characters want to perform an Action at the same time, each character should make a DEX Roll (or EGO Roll, if using a Mental Power); the character who makes his DEX Roll by more gets to act first. If both characters make the roll by the same amount, their Held Actions occur simultaneously. Regardless of the roll, defensive Actions (any the character could Abort to; see below) occur first; the need to make a DEX Roll only applies to attacks, movement Actions, and the like.

A character who Holds his Action on Segment 12 still gets his Post-Segment 12 Recovery (see page 142), and may use his Held Action in the next Turn on any Segment until a Segment in which he has another Phase.

Example: *Defender (SPD 5) and Ogre (SPD 5) are in HTH Combat. It's Segment 12. On DEX 23, Defender Holds his Action. On DEX 18, Ogre charges Defender. Defender decides to fire his Energy Blast. Since both characters want to act at the same time, each must make a DEX Roll. Defender rolls a 7, making his roll by 7. Ogre rolls a 14, missing his roll by 1. Defender made his roll by more, so he acts first. If Ogre is still standing afterward, he can then take his Action. If the rolls had been made by equal amounts, the two characters would have taken their Actions simultaneously.*

If Witchcraft had used an attack in Segment 12 to Knock Ogre Out before he could attack Defender, Defender could continue Holding his Action and use it in Segment 1 or 2 of the next Turn. This would not prevent him from taking a Post-Segment 12 Recovery. He could not Hold his Action into Segment 3, however, because that's his next Phase. When Segment 3 begins, if he hasn't used his Held Action, he loses it. He can't even use it in Segment 3 before DEX 23 comes up — he loses it as soon as Segment 3 begins.

Generally, Holding an Action does not affect a character's Combat Value. If a character Blocks, or uses some other Combat Maneuver that affects his CV, in a Phase, and in his next Phase declares a Held Action, at that point he loses the CV modifiers from the Maneuver. Just because he chooses to delay his Action doesn't mean his Phase hasn't occurred, and that ends the effect of a Combat Maneuver. However, his Combat Skill Levels, if any, remain allocated as they were until he changes them.

Aborting An Action

Sometimes a character can act first to protect himself, regardless of relative DEX or the fact that he doesn't have a Phase. This is done by *Aborting* an Action (sometimes called "Cancelling a Move").

DEFENSIVE ACTIONS ONLY

A character can only Abort his next Action to perform a *defensive Action.* The text box on page 23 lists some examples of what constitute "defensive Actions."

A character cannot normally Abort to a movement Action, such as to run, fly, or Teleport out of danger's way. Dive For Cover and decelerating or turning are exceptions to this — although they do involve some movement, characters can Abort to them. At the GM's option, characters may be allowed to Abort to other forms of movement in appropriate circumstances.

A character can never Abort to make an attack (including to use a Damage Shield, which is not a defensive power). However, if a character has an attack of some kind Linked to a Defense Power (for example, a Damage Shield Linked to a Force Field), he may activate the attack when he Aborts to activate the Defense Power.

Ordinarily a character can only Abort to protect himself. However, with the GM's permission, a character can Abort to protect others (for example, to step in front of an attack intended to hit another character, or to use Missile Deflection at range to save someone from a bullet).

A character may perform more than one defensive Action while Aborting — such as Aborting to Dodge and simultaneously activating a Defense Power — provided they're not mutually

THE "NULL ZONE"

As the text indicates, a Held Action is lost at the beginning of the Segment on which the character's next Phase occurs. Thus, there's a "null zone" between the start of that Segment and the start of the character's Phase (which begins on his DEX in that Segment). This may create some difficulties if a character wants to Hold his Action in anticipation of something his foe will do when the foe has a higher DEX.

In this situation, the GM should apply some common sense and dramatic sense. If a character wants to Hold his Action in anticipation of a foe's conduct, the GM could use the Held Action to, in essence, move the character "up" in the initiative order for the Phase, so he can "go first" before his foe *only for the purposes of starting another Held Action.* But if players start abusing this privilege, or it causes problems, the GM should stop allowing this and revert to the strict letter of the rules.

exclusive. For example, a character cannot Abort to Dodge and Block; both are Combat Maneuvers and cannot be performed together.

Whether a character can Abort, and to what Actions, is always subject to the GM's discretion. The GM may limit a character's capacity to Abort based on the circumstances, the special effects of powers, Limitations taken on particular powers, and so forth (see below).

Example: *Willy Watson can turn into Muscleman when he utters a secret word. In his Muscleman form he has significantly greater defenses (and a higher DCV to boot). Therefore the GM normally should allow him to Abort to activate his Muscleman powers and switch identities (he might not allow this if Watson couldn't speak for some reason). On the other hand, James Harmon, the superhero Defender, has bought all of his powers (including Defense Powers) through a powered armor suit, which he simulates with the Limitation Only In Heroic Identity. When he's not wearing the armor, he carries it around in his briefcase. The GM rules that, since it takes him at least a full Phase or longer to get the suit out of the case and put it on, Defender cannot Abort to any of the Defense Powers he bought through the suit.*

GM's Permission Actions

Generally, a character cannot Abort to shield his eyes, or otherwise protect himself from, the effects of a Flash. The rules note that a character has to be "prepared" to do that, and Aborting typically implies a lack of preparation. However, the GM could allow a character to "Abort to cover my eyes" if he wanted to.

Characters can only Abort to "right one's self" or "get to one's feet" after suffering Knockback with the GM's permission.

Characters can only Abort to create a wall with Entangle with the GM's permission. Before granting permission, the GM should decide that creating an Entangle wall constitutes a "defensive Action," rather than an attempt to separate two areas, block someone's escape, or the like.

A character cannot Abort to using his full STR the very same moment he's Grabbed unless the GM specifically permits this on the grounds that it's "defensive" because being free from a Grab prevents the character from suffering the usual DCV penalty for being Grabbed.

HOW TO ABORT AN ACTION

Typically a character must declare an Abort when an attacker announces he's attacking that character, but before any rolls are made. A character can't wait to see whether an Attack Roll misses, and if it hits, *then* declare an Abort (unless, of course, the GM permits this for the sake of drama).

Aborting an Action requires the character's next full Phase to perform — in essence, the character uses his next Phase "early" to protect himself. If he's Holding a Phase or Half Phase, he may Abort to use his Held Action to perform a defensive Action; in that case he does not lose any more Phases. If a character Aborts his next Phase, he can't act until the Phase after that.

Example: *Lazer (SPD 5) is attacked in Segment 6 and decides to Abort to Dodge. Doing so uses up his Phase in Segment 8 — when Segment 8 rolls around, Lazer can do nothing (but at least he'll still have the benefit of the extra DCV from the Dodge); he won't get to act again until his Phase in Segment 10. If Lazer was attacked in Segment 5 before his DEX came up, he would instead have lost his Action in Segment 5 when he Aborted to Dodge — since he had not yet had the chance to take an Action, he still had his full Phase left in Segment 5 and could use it to Abort to Dodge. If Lazer was attacked in Segment 5 after he made a Half Move and was Holding his remaining Half Phase Action, he could Abort to Dodge and sacrifice his Held Half Phase; he would not have to use up a full Phase in that instance.*

Example: *A character has DEX 20, SPD 4, which means he normally has a Phase on Segments 3, 6, 9, and 12. In Segment 2, he Aborts his Phase in Segment 3 to Block. Since he's used his Phase on Segment 3, he can't do anything then (though he can keep Blocking if he's attacked again, using the standard rules for that). When his next Phase rolls around, in Segment 6, he can then attack.*

If this same character Aborted in Segment 3, but before his Phase occurs (for example, to Dodge an attack from a character with DEX 25), he could Abort again on Segment 4 if necessary. The Phase he lost was the one he would normally have in Segment 3.

Once a character has performed an Attack Action or otherwise used his full Phase in a particular Segment, he cannot Abort to any Action until the next Segment. For example, if Lazer's DEX came up in Segment 5 and he used his Phase to attack Defender, and Defender then attacked him back, Lazer could not Abort — he's already acted in Segment 5. He must wait until Segment 6 before he can Abort his next Phase.

Once a character Aborts, he cannot Abort again or take any other Actions until after the Phase he Aborted has passed. For example, suppose a SPD 4 character (Phases in 3, 6, 9, and 12) Aborts his Phase in Segment 6 in Segment 4 to Dodge an attack. He cannot Abort again, or take any other Actions, in Segments 4, 5, or 6. After Segment 6 passes (*i.e.,* in Segment 7 or later), he can Abort again (for example, in Segment 7 or 8 he could Abort his Phase in Segment 9).

If a character Aborts his Phase in Segment 12 in an earlier Segment (say, Segment 11), in Segment 12 he cannot Abort his first Phase in the next Turn — standard rules for Aborting apply. The character can't Abort again until after the Segment in which he'd have the Phase he Aborted has passed.

Characters who are Surprised normally cannot Abort their next Phase; they have, after all, been

taken unawares (see *Surprised,* page 50). However, the GM may, in his discretion, allow them to Abort.

An Action a character Aborts to always "goes first," even if an opponent is already attacking or has a higher DEX. For example, if a character Aborts to activate his Force Field, he automatically gets the Force Field turned on before any opponent can attack him or complete an Action.

A character can Abort to a power that takes a Full Phase, Delayed Phase, or Extra Segment. He can Abort to a power that takes an Extra Phase, but if so he loses his next two Phases. He cannot Abort to powers that take more Extra Time than an Extra Phase unless the GM permits him to.

Aborting, Constant Powers, And Endurance

A character who Aborts to activate a Constant Power pays END in the Segment when he activates the power (*i.e.,* when he Aborts). He must pay END to maintain the power in the usual fashion, but he does not have to pay END again until the next Phase in which he can act (in other words, not the Phase he Aborted, but the next one after that).

If a Constant Power is already in effect when a character Aborts one of his Phases, he pays the END to maintain the Power in the Segment in which he Aborts (regardless of the type of Power). For bookkeeping purposes, since he's effectively taking his Phase then, it's easiest just to have him pay the END then, too. He doesn't pay any additional END in the Segment in which he'd normally have the Phase he Aborted; thereafter he pays END on his Phases as usual.

DEFENSIVE ACTIONS

Some valid defensive Actions for Aborting include:

Block (including any Martial Maneuvers with the *Block* Element).

Dodge (including any Martial Maneuvers with the *Dodge* Element).

Dive For Cover (see text).

Any Combat or Martial Maneuver with the *Abort* Element.

Activating a Defense Power (this includes shifting the allocation of points in a Power Framework to use a Defense Power; shifting the allocation of Combat Skill Levels that can improve DCV; and switching forms, shapes, or identities to obtain more defense or protection).

Activating any Power that provides a character with more points of defense (for example, Density Increase, Growth Linked to Armor) or some other significant form of protection (such as Desolidification).

Decelerating or turning while moving, operating a vehicle, or riding a mount.

Resisting Knockback with STR or Flight.

Use of any other Maneuver, activation/use of any other Power, or performing any other Action deemed by the GM to be primarily for purposes of defending or protecting the character.

ACTIONS TABLE

Action	Time Required	Move Required
Brace	0 Phase	—
Find Weakness	½ Phase	—
Grab	½ Phase $*	—
Haymaker	½ Phase #*	—
Missile Deflection	½ Phase *	—
Move By	½ Phase *†	1"
Move Through	½ Phase *†	1"
Set	1 Phase	—
Set and Brace	1 Phase	—
Other Combat Maneuvers		
Any action that requires an Attack Roll	½ Phase *	—
Accelerating/decelerating	0 Phase	—
Change clothes	1 Phase	—
Draw a weapon	½ Phase	—
Get to one's feet	½ Phase	—
Make a PER Roll with a Nontargeting Sense to perceive an enemy	½ Phase	—
Make a Presence Attack	No Time	—
Make a roll at the GM's request	No Time	—
Make a Skill Roll	Variable	—
Open a door	½ Phase	—
Recover from being Stunned	1 Phase	—
Shift a Multipower	0 Phase &	—
Shift Skill Levels	0 Phase &	—
Speaking (conversation)	Variable	—
Speaking (soliloquy)	No Time	—
Start a vehicle	½ Phase	—
Take a Recovery	1 Phase	—
Turn on a Power	0 Phase &	—
Turn off a Power	0 Phase	—
Use Casual Strength	0 Phase	—
Use more than half of your inches of movement	1 Phase	Full Move
Use up to half of your inches of movement	½ Phase	Half Move

Action takes place at the very end of the next Segment

$ A character who has made a successful Grab can squeeze the target for his normal STR damage or Throw him.

* Attack Action — the character may not perform another Action after these Actions, but may perform a Half Phase Action before these Actions.

† Move By and Move Through are usually performed at the end of a Full Move, and thus take a Full Phase. However, a character could perform one after taking a Half Phase Action (such as opening a door), so they're listed as Half Phase Actions.

& Even though they are Zero Phase Actions, a character can only perform these Actions once per Segment. In the case of turning on a Power, this applies *per Power,* not to the character's Powers as a whole.

The Actions Table

The Actions Table lists some examples of the Actions a character can perform in a Phase. The GM must decide how long an Action not listed on the Action Table takes, using the listed examples as guidelines.

Example: *Wendell wants his character to run to a pedestal and grab a mind-control helmet. The GM might call that a Half Move and a Grab maneuver.*

MOVEMENT

All characters have some sort of movement ability, be it ordinary movement (such as walking or swimming) or more exotic abilities like Flight or Teleportation.

FULL MOVES AND HALF MOVES

Each Phase a character may move any portion of his inches of movement with a particular mode of movement. A *Full Move* is defined as moving more than half of a character's movement distance with a particular mode of movement. It takes a Full Phase Action to make a Full Move; a character who has made a Full Move can't perform any other Action in that Phase.

A *Half Move* is defined as moving up to half of a character's movement distance with a particular mode of movement. A character who's made a Half Move can perform another Half Phase Action in that Phase (including making a Half Move with some other mode of movement, if desired).

Example: *Kinetik has Running 20". That means he can perform Half Moves of 1-10". If he moves 11" or more in a Phase, that's a Full Move.*

COMBAT AND NONCOMBAT MOVEMENT

The *HERO System* rules divide movement into two categories: Combat Movement and Noncombat Movement.

A character using *Combat Movement,* which equals the number of inches of a given mode of movement he's purchased or can use naturally, moves as quickly as possible while still looking out for incoming attacks. A character using Combat Movement has his full DCV and OCV and can move up to his full movement rate.

A character using *Noncombat Movement* moves as quickly as he can — he isn't looking out for incoming attacks. A character's usual rate of Noncombat Movement is double his Combat Movement rate; he can increase this rate without increasing his Combat Movement (see *Movement Powers, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 122-25). While moving at Noncombat Movement velocity, a character is at ½ DCV and 0 OCV (and ½ DECV and 0 OECV, if appropriate). (If the character wants to make an attack, the 0 OCV counts as his base OCV, and can be modified from that point.) If the GM wants additional "realism,"

he can use the Velocity-Based DCV to determine the character's DCV, but the OCV of a character using Noncombat Movement is always 0. Thus, a character using Noncombat Movement can still fight, but at the lowered values. Of course, to attack, the character must limit himself to only making a Half Move with his Noncombat Movement.

Example: *Kinetik has Running 20" with x16 Noncombat Movement. His Combat Movement is 20". When Running at speeds of 20" per Phase or less, he retains his full OCV and DCV. His Noncombat Movement velocity can be as high as (20 x 16 =) 320" per Phase. If he moves from 21-320" per Phase, he's using Noncombat Movement, which means he's at half DCV, 0 OCV.*

If Kinetik hadn't purchased Increased Noncombat Movement, he'd have the normal Noncombat Movement rate of double his Combat Movement, or 40". In that case, if he ran at velocities of 21-40" per Phase, he'd be using Noncombat Movement and suffer the standard CV penalty.

VELOCITY-BASED DCV

To use this optional rule, the player should determine the total number of inches his character would travel in an entire Turn while using a particular mode of movement at a particular rate (this allows a character's SPD to factor into the calculation). The simple formula for this is:

Velocity per Phase x SPD = Inches per Turn

Once the character knows his velocity per Turn, the Velocity-Based DCV Table tells him his DCV.

Velocity-Based DCV is *relative;* two characters or vehicles moving at the same high speed in the same direction have their normal DCVs — relative to each other, they're not moving fast at all. As a good rule of thumb, if characters are moving in the same direction, subtract the attacker's velocity from the target's velocity (see page 70). If the result is 0 or less, the target gets its normal DCV; if the result is greater than 0, use that figure to determine its Velocity-Based DCV. On the other hand, if the characters are heading directly towards each other, add their velocities together to determine each one's Velocity-Based DCV relative to the other.

VELOCITY-BASED DCV TABLE

Velocity in Inches per Turn	Base DCV
1-32	1
33-64	3
65-125	5
126-250	7
251-500	9
501-1,000	11
1,001-2,000	13
2,001-4,000	15
4,001-8,000	17
8,001-16,000	19
and so forth	

ACCELERATION, DECELERATION, AND GRAVITY

When using his movement, a character can accelerate at a rate of 5" per hex, up to his maximum normal Combat Movement in inches per Phase. Thus a character with 25" of Flight would be moving at a velocity of 5" after traveling one hex, 10" after traveling two hexes, 15" after traveling three hexes, and so on, up to his Combat Movement velocity. Adding or removing velocity is a Zero Phase Action, but characters can do it only once per Phase, unless the GM rules otherwise.

A character can decelerate at the same rate, up to his normal Combat Movement velocity. Since the total acceleration or deceleration in a Phase is limited to the character's Combat Movement velocity, a character with a high Noncombat Movement may need several Phases to reach maximum velocity or to slow down at the end of his journey. Characters can buy Advantages for their Movement Powers that allow them to accelerate and decelerate more quickly. See *Movement Powers, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 122-25.

A character cannot instantly decelerate to 0" by turning off a Movement Power, or by switching to another slot in a Power Framework (if that's how he bought the Power). He may not deactivate the Movement Power until he decelerates to 0" normally or through some outside means (such as being hit with an attack that would stop him from moving), or the GM specifically allows him to.

Flight, Gliding, Running, Swimming, and Swinging are also affected by gravity (other Movement Powers are not so affected). When moving in a direction consistent with gravity (for example, diving with Flight, or Running down a steep hill), the character may add +1" of movement for every 1" of movement he uses. For instance, a character using 15" of Flight in a dive would add +15" for a total of 30" of Flight per Phase. Since this doesn't improve the character's ability to decelerate, going too fast can lead to spectacular crashes. When working against gravity (Flying straight up or at a steep angle, Running up steep stairs), the character must use 2" of movement to move 1" (effectively halving his movement rate).

Gravity's effect on a character's velocity affects the damage a character does with Move By, Move Through, and similar Combat Maneuvers. For example, a Move Through performed by using Flight 20" to dive straight down toward the target does (40/3 =) +13d6 damage from velocity.

ENDURANCE

Unless noted otherwise in a Movement Power's description, all movement costs END at the rate of 1 END per 10 Active Points in the Movement Power. (This includes movement the character receives for "free," such as the standard Running 6" and Leaping from STR.) If a character moves at Noncombat velocities, the END cost equals the END he uses to move at Combat velocities — a character with Flight 15" and a x8 Noncombat Movement multiple (total of 40 Active Points and Flight 120") only spends 4 END per Phase.

REAL-WORLD SPEEDS

Characters who want to know how fast they're moving in real-world terms (such as miles per hour) can find out using this formula:

1. First, figure out how many total inches the character moves in a Turn. (In other words, multiply his maximum Noncombat Movement velocity by his SPD.)

2. Multiply that by 5 to determine the character's inches of movement per minute.

3. Multiply that result by 60 to find out the character's inches of movement per hour.

4. There are 804.5" in a mile and 500" in a kilometer. Divide a character's inches of movement per hour by those figures to determine his speed in miles or kilometers per hour.

For example, Kinetik has Running 20", x16 Noncombat, and SPD 7. That means he moves (20 x 16 =) 320" per Phase at his maximum velocity, or (320 x 7 =) 2,240" per Turn. That's a velocity of (2,240 x 5 = 11,200" per Minute, or 672,000" per Hour; 672,000"/804.5 =) 835 miles per hour!

MOVEMENT AND STRENGTH

As an optional rule, the GM can allow characters to use their Flight or Leaping to enhance their ability to lift or push. (He can allow them to use other forms of movement in appropriate circumstances; for example, a character who's underwater might be able to augment his STR with Swimming.) Every 2" of Combat Movement becomes +1 point of STR. Any movement "velocity" used in this way cannot be used for movement, nor can characters apply it to increase the damage done by Combat Maneuvers and similar attacks that use the character's STR to do damage.

Example: *Defender sees a building about to fall on a crowd of innocent civilians. He flies under the building, but his 55 STR is not enough to hold it up. Thinking quickly, he points his bootjets straight down. He decides to use all of his 10" of Flight to increase his STR; his STR (only for purposes of holding the building up) is now 55 + (10/2) = 60.*

Stopping Moving Objects

Characters can also use STR to oppose another character's or object's movement — to stop a speeding car or runaway horse, for example. To do this, the character must make an Attack Roll to Grab the character or object and obtain a firm hold; the object may make a STR Roll (with additions to STR from movement) every Phase to break free from the character's grip (this is a Zero Phase Action, but may only be done once per Phase). For every 5 points of STR a character has (including STR added from movement), he may subtract 1" of movement per Phase. Thus, a character with 50 STR subtracts 10" of movement the first Phase he tries to stop a moving object, another 10" the next Phase (reducing the character's or object's movement by a total of 20"), and so on until the object gets away from him or is brought to 0" of movement.

If the character fails to stop the moving character or object completely with his STR the first Phase he tries to do so, but it does not break free from his grip, he will be dragged along by the moving character or object unless he lets go. If he is dragged, his weight may cause the moving character or object to slow down even further. Consult the rules for Encumbrance (pages 45-46) to determine what effect, if any, the extra weight has, based on the character's or vehicle's STR (if the object is not a vehicle, the GM should assign it a STR for this purpose).

Example: *Defender (STR 55, Flight 10", weighs 200 kg) tries to stop a runaway bus (STR 40, Ground Movement 15", moving at 45" per Phase with Noncombat Movement). He makes an Attack Roll and Grabs the vehicle. The vehicle immediately gets to try to break free from his Grab. It rolls 9½d6 (for 40 STR + 8 STR from Combat Movement) and gets 8 BODY; Defender rolls 12d6 (for 55 STR + 5 STR from Combat Movement) and gets 12 BODY, so he maintains his Grab. Defender's STR slows the bus down by 12"; it's now moving at 33" per Phase. Because Defender did not stop it and it did not break his grip, he's being dragged (or pushed) along by the vehicle; his weight isn't enough to slow it down any further. He keeps subtracting 12" per Phase from its movement until it comes to a stop or breaks free.*

Expanded Rules For Stopping Moving Objects

Some GMs also need rules for much bigger moving objects — avalanches and landslides, meteors and comets, and the like.

Any object that applies constant force in its forward progress is referred to as a "resisting object." This category includes vehicles operating under their own power, objects moved by gravity powers or Telekinesis, and the like.

All these objects have two significant characteristics: their movement rate and their Strength. For objects moved by gravity or Telekinesis, calcu-

EXAMPLE RESISTING OBJECTS

The following are suggested STR and movement values for various resisting objects characters might encounter:

Asteroid/meteor, small*: STR 40-60, movement 500"

Asteroid/meteor, medium*: STR 60-100, movement 500"

Asteroid/meteor, large*: STR 100-150, movement 500"

Avalanche, small*: STR 30-40, movement 20"

Avalanche, medium*: STR 40-50, movement 20"

Avalanche, large*: STR 50-60, movement 20"

Bus/truck: STR 40-55, movement up to 100" Noncombat

Car: STR 30-40, movement up to 125" Noncombat

Tidal wave, small*: STR 30-40, movement 80-120"

Tidal wave, medium*: STR 40-50, movement 80-120"

Tidal wave, large*: STR 50-60, movement 80-120"

Train/subway: STR 55-65, movement 40-80" Noncombat (or up to 336" for bullet trains)

*: Character may need a Force Wall or large, flat object to "Grab" this "object."

late the strength of the gravity/Telekinesis rather than that of the object. Gravity has a STR value equal to the amount of STR necessary to pick up the entire resisting object in the first place — if it's a normal-sized man, gravity acts on it with STR 10; if it's a 100-ton space shuttle, gravity has STR 60. If the object doesn't have its own STR Characteristic naturally, and isn't being affected by gravity, the GM should assign it a STR based on its size, mass, and any other factor he deems relevant.

A character trying to stop a moving resisting object must first put himself in a position to apply movement (opposite to its current direction) to some portion of it (preferably its most forward point — that tends to be most efficient, and is the most visually appealing). This usually means the character must use his own movement abilities to get to that point, normally without making a Move Through or Move By attack against the resisting object. Once he's in position, use the basic "stopping moving objects" rules, above, to determine if he can get a hold on the object and start to slow it down. Typically, a character needs to have an appropriate Movement Power to stop a resisting object — a superhero who lacks Flight usually can't Grab a flying object and use his STR to slow it down, since he has no way to counter its forward momentum. The GM may waive this rule in appropriate circumstances.

Generally, a character can only stop a resisting object if he has enough STR to lift that object when it's not in motion. Weaker characters who try to stop a resisting object simply suffer a Move Through from the object and get knocked out of the way or dragged along. Characters may also find it more difficult (or impossible) to properly Grab and stop some types of objects, such as tidal waves or avalanches; they may need to have Force Wall, or a large, flat object, to use as a tool in this situation.

The simple, easy to use rule described above allows a character to subtract inches of movement from the resisting object's velocity each Phase automatically, based on his STR. To make the situation more dangerous, difficult, and dramatic, the GM may want to change this a little to render the outcome less certain: the character must make a STR Versus STR Roll against the resisting object each Phase; if he loses, he doesn't get to subtract any inches of movement from it that Phase. (At the GM's option, if he wins the roll by a significant margin, he may subtract more movement than normal for that Phase.)

If a character fails to stop a moving object that he's Grabbed, in later Phases he can choose to Squeeze it and damage it instead of using his STR to subtract inches of movement. He cannot Throw it or use any other option for Grab; all he can do is Squeeze. Assuming he does enough damage, he may destroy the object, bring it to a halt, cause it to crash, or the like.

OBSTACLES

If a character comes to an obstacle while moving, he has several options. First, he can stop his movement, assuming he has sufficient room to slow down. Second, he can perform a Move Through on the object, thereby smashing through it (if successful) or running into it and hurting himself (if not). Third, he can try to shrug it aside by using his Casual Strength (see *Strength, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 34, for more details on Casual STR).

Example: *Baran the warrior (STR 25) is fleeing from a fire demon when he comes to a thin wooden door. Not wanting to slow down, Baran uses his Casual STR — 13 STR — to try to push the door open. The GM looks at the Strength Table to find that 13 STR would lift 150 kg, so he rules that's more than enough to push aside the door. Baran flings the door wide and continues his escape without wasting a step.*

SEGMENTED MOVEMENT

Some types of movement don't work realistically by uneven Phases. In this case, you can split the movement into Segment by Segment movement. This helps to simulate falls and similar situations where the character's SPD doesn't directly affect his velocity. If a character uses Segmented Movement, he should move on every *Segment,* instead of every Phase. The GM can multiply his velocity per Phase x SPD to determine his velocity per Turn, and then divide that by 12 to determine how fast he moves per Segment.

FACING

Generally speaking, the *HERO System* doesn't have any rules for facing (*i.e.,* which direction a character's looking toward). The only specific rules in the system for changing facing pertain to Teleportation (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 234). If an issue pertaining to facing comes up in the game, changing facing while Running, Leaping, Swimming, Swinging, or Tunneling is a Zero Phase Action in most circumstances. That means a character can't do it after performing a Full Phase Action, but the GM can rule otherwise based on the situation, the abilities involved, common and dramatic sense, and other relevant factors. Changing facing with Flight, Gliding, or Teleportation depends on Turn Modes and/or the the use of the *Position Shift* Adder.

Normal Movement

"Normal" movement means those modes of movement all characters possess — Running, Leaping, and Swimming.

RUNNING

Running is the standard form of movement for most characters. All characters start with 6" of Running; they can increase this by +1" for every 2 Character Points. In Heroic campaigns, the Normal Characteristic Maximum breakpoint for Running is 10" per Phase; after this maximum, the cost doubles. There is no maximum for Superheroic campaigns. Running has no Turn Mode (see *Flight,* below); a character can turn as often as he wants when Running. The GM may require characters to use a Turn Mode if the footing is especially treacherous.

LEAPING

All characters have a base forward leap of 1" and a base upward leap of ½" (half the forward leap) for every 5 points of STR; a character can increase his forward leap by +1" for every 1 Character Point. The Normal Characteristic Maximum breakpoint for Leaping in Heroic campaigns is 5"; after this maximum the cost doubles. There is no maximum for Superheroic campaigns.

It's impossible to change direction once a leap has started — there's no way to leap around a corner, for example. A leap is considered to include a short run to get some velocity; a standing leap is only half as far. It's possible to perform a leap of up to half the character's inches as a Half Move. For some leaps, characters may have to make Attack Rolls to land in the target hex (see *Leaping, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 196). When a character lands from a leap, he does not hurt himself, and generally causes no damage to whatever he lands on unless he's performing a Move Through or the GM rules otherwise.

SWIMMING

All characters can swim a base distance of 2" per Phase. A character can increase his Swimming rate by +1" for every 1 Character Point. The Normal Characteristic Maximum breakpoint for Swimming in Heroic campaigns is 5"; after this maximum the cost doubles. There is no maximum for Superheroic campaigns. Swimming has no Turn Mode; a character can make as many turns as he wants when Swimming.

Based on their conception, some characters won't know how to swim. For example, Dwajmi the desert nomad has never seen water except in a well or a shallow oasis, so he's never learned to swim. Characters such as Dwajmi may sell back their natural 2" of Swimming, gaining 2 Character Points to spend on something else. If they later decide to learn how to swim, they must buy Swimming at the standard cost. Unless a character has at least 1" of Swimming, he cannot even stay afloat. The GM may rule that some characters (for example, Heavyworlders in a Science Fiction campaign) can never learn how to swim.

Powered Movement

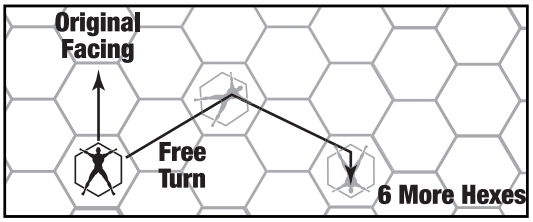
"Powered" movement means those modes of movement characters have to pay Character Points for: Flight; Gliding; Swinging; Teleportation; and Tunneling. (It also includes Extra-Dimensional Movement and FTL Travel, but those aren't covered here.)

FLIGHT

A character's Flight speed depends on how many Character Points he spent on Flight. A character who flies isn't as maneuverable as someone on the ground — he has a *Turn Mode* that defines how often he may make a 60-degree turn (or a one hex side shift on a hex grid). The Turn Mode is defined by the formula:

Current Turn Mode = Total Distance Traveled This Phase/5

A character can make his first 60-degree turn any time after the start of his move; this turn is "free." Once he's turned, he cannot turn again until he moves his Turn Mode in inches forward. As a simple rule, a character using Combat Movement cannot make more than five evenly spaced turns during a move. If the character moves at Noncombat velocities, he can make no more than two evenly spaced turns.



Example: *Lazer flies at 10" per Phase. Using the formula, he has a Turn Mode of 10/5 = 2". Lazer wants to turn around, so he turns 60 degrees, moves 2", turns 60 degrees, moves 2", turns a final 60 degrees and completes his move by flying 6" (see illustration).*

As discussed on page 25, gravity affects Flight. A flying character must use 2" of Flight distance to gain 1" of altitude (*i.e.,* to fly upward, against gravity). If he dives, he gains +1" of velocity for every 1" of Flight distance he has (*i.e.,* flying downward, with gravity, increases his speed). To pull out of such a dive, the character should dive his Turn Mode in inches. If he's diving straight down (his Flight distance in inches free, plus his Flight distance down) then he must dive twice his Turn Mode. When a character has pulled out of a dive, he's considered to be flying level (at his regular velocity) and can continue flying whatever direction he wants.

GLIDING

The GM should regulate how rapidly a gliding character can climb. Climbing is relatively easy when there are thermals or good winds; a glider can generally gain 1d6" of altitude per Phase (halved for working against gravity, as normal). At other times a character's ability to gain altitude may be limited or nonexistent. The Turn Mode and dive rate of a gliding character are the same as for Flight. Characters can only gain velocity while Gliding by losing altitude (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 182).

SWINGING

A character's Swinging speed depends on how many Character Points he spent on Swinging. The GM determines the direction of a swing based on the situation, the point to which the character attaches his swingline, and other factors. Typically a swing takes place in a straight line, and the character cannot change direction once he begins the swing (he cannot, for example, swing around corners, though the GM might allow minor shifts in direction based on body motion and the like). However, the GM may allow characters to swing in arcs in some circumstances. For example, if a character attaches his swingline to the corner of a building, he might be able to swing in an arc around the corner of the building. In this case, Swinging has the standard Turn Mode (see above), unless the GM rules otherwise. The character should describe the arc of his swing to the GM before making it so the GM can approve it, and cannot change it once he begins the swing unless the GM permits him to.

TELEPORTATION

Many aspects of and rules for Teleporting are covered under *Teleportation, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 233.

Teleporting Blind

When a character cannot see his target location and doesn't have it memorized, any attempt to Teleport is considered "blind." The character makes an Attack Roll to hit the target hex (DCV 3), with a normal Range Modifier. If the roll misses, he ends up in a different hex (use the standard rules for attacks that miss a hex to determine where he goes). If the hex is occupied, the character takes damage.

Teleporting Into A Solid Object

If a character is unlucky enough to Teleport into a solid object (for whatever reason), his natural safety system kicks in, getting him to the closest space from the target hex where he fits. The system shock is terrible, and may be fatal. To determine damage, use the accompanying table. The Teleporting character gets no defenses of any kind against this damage.

It's impossible for a character to deliberately Teleport another character into a solid object, even if the Teleportation is bought *Usable As Attack.*

Example: *Cheshire Cat (Teleportation 30") is in a cell. Although he can't see out, he decides to try to escape by Teleporting straight up. He declares his target hex and makes a successful Attack Roll (even after applying the Range Modifier). Unfortunately, the cell is buried 100" underground, so the nearest safe loca-*

TELEPORTATION DAMAGE TABLE

2d6 Roll	Effect
2-7	3d6 of d6 STUN Only Damage
8-11	2d6 of d6 Normal Damage
12	1d6 of d6 Killing Damage

If the nearest safe hex is further than the character's Combat Movement with Teleportation, add 2 to the effect roll. If the nearest safe hex is more than double his Combat Movement with Teleportation, add 4 to the effect roll.

tion is the cell. His Teleportation shifts him back to the cell automatically. The GM rolls 2d6 for the effect; he rolls a 9, which means Cheshire Cat takes 2d6 of d6 of Normal Damage. The roll is an 8, so the Cat takes 8d6 Normal Damage with no defense.

TUNNELING

Tunneling has no Turn Mode. A character cannot automatically perceive where he's going when he's Tunneling unless he has Sensory Powers that let him perceive through the medium he's Tunneling through. See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 241 for more information.

Vehicle Movement

Vehicles move just like characters: they have a SPD, Combat Movement velocity, and Noncombat Movement velocity. However, all vehicles have a Turn Mode with all forms of movement (see *Flight,* above), including Ground Movement (Running).

For further information on vehicle movement in combat situations, see *Vehicle Combat, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 471-75.

Mounted Movement

In some games, such as Fantasy campaigns, a lot of movement takes place while the characters are riding horses or other mounts. This often provides a character with greatly enhanced movement capability, but at the cost of restricting his ability to perform certain Actions in combat.

A mount essentially functions as a vehicle. Its inches of Running (or other form of movement) substitute for the character's. However, when it moves, and what Actions it can take, depend upon its SPD and DEX and the rider's SPD and DEX.

RELATIVE SPEED AND DEXTERITY

If the rider's SPD exceeds the mount's, the rider can only make the mount move on its own Phases. The rider either has to (a) Hold his Action so he can act on his mount's Phases (thus, they act together); (b) make the mount Hold its Actions so that it takes its Phases in Segments in which the rider also has a Phase; or (c) limit himself to performing Actions other than moving (such as attacking or defending himself) in Segments in which he has a Phase but the mount does not.

If the mount's SPD exceeds the rider's, or the mount has Phases in Segments in which the rider does not, the rider can make the mount Hold its Action so their Phases coincide, thus allowing him more control over the mount (or the rider may, if he chooses, Hold his own Actions for the same purpose). However, the rider may choose to let the mount move on its own, with only minimal control from him. To do so, he makes a Riding roll (this takes no time). If he succeeds, the mount makes a Half Move or Full Move in whatever direction the rider desires; it may, if it makes only a Half Move, perform another Half Phase Action (such as an attack, if it's trained to fight). If he fails, the mount does not move, or may move in an undesired direction. In either case, the rider is considered to be moving at Noncombat Movement velocity (and thus to be at ½ DCV), regardless of his actual velocity. (This penalty only applies in this specific situation; riding a mount does not always halve DCV, see *Combat Values And Fighting,* below.)

Regardless of their relative SPDs, both rider and mount can only act on their own DEXs in their Phases. Thus, if a high-DEX character rides a low-DEX mount, he has to wait until the mount's DEX comes up during the Phase before the mount (and thus he) can move. The rider can take his Action (such as attacking a nearby foe) on his own DEX — but if he does so, he'll be unable to control the mount properly if it moves on its own DEX (just as if the mount moves in a Segment in which it has a Phase but the rider does not).

COMBAT TRAINING FOR MOUNTS

In combat, the rider's ability to function effectively as a mounted warrior depends on whether his mount is trained for battle or not. A mount is considered trained for combat if it has a Presence of 15 or greater or it knows the *Riding* Skill itself (in this case, the Skill simulates the mount's self-control and knowledge of how to move to help its rider fight). If a mount isn't trained for combat, the rider must spend a Half Phase and make a Riding roll every one of his Phases; this helps him keep the mount under control and make it act as he wishes (though he cannot make it attack). Furthermore, even if the rider makes his Riding roll, he is at ½ OCV (his DCV remains normal). If the rider fails his Riding roll, he must make a second Riding roll to keep from being thrown; he can do nothing that Phase but hang on to the mount and make a Half Move directly away from the thick of battle.

If the mount is trained for combat, the rider may make the mount move without making a Riding roll; furthermore, the rider is at normal OCV (but suffers a -2 penalty; see below). If rider and mount both have a Phase in the same Segment, both may attack. They make up to a Half Move, and then the rider makes a Riding roll (this takes no time). If the roll succeeds, the rider may make his attack, and the mount may also make an attack. Alternately, the mount can make a Full Move (thus preventing it from making an attack) and the rider has a Half Phase Action in which to attack or defend himself. If the roll fails, the rider may use his remaining Half Phase to attack, but the mount may not attack or move any further.

COMBAT VALUES AND FIGHTING

In combat, the mount and the rider each have their own CVs calculated from their own DEXs. However, the rider is always at -2 OCV because, even with a trained combat mount, he must spend some energy and concentration keeping his seat and controlling his mount. At the GM's option, any negative modifiers applied to the Riding roll in a Phase may also apply to the rider's (or the mount's) OCV, reflecting the difficulty of keeping the mount controlled in

such conditions. If the rider attacks targets on foot, and the campaign uses Hit Locations, the Hit Location should be rolled as a High Shot (see pages 117-20).

If a mount is injured, its rider may, at the GM's option, have to make another Riding roll to control it (this takes no time). If he fails the roll, the mount moves away from combat as fast as it can in its next Phase. Mounts trained for combat usually won't do this unless badly injured (*i.e.,* they take 5 or more BODY from a single attack).

If the mount takes Knockback from an attack, it usually loses its balance and falls. The rider must make a Riding roll to leap off the mount or otherwise prevent himself from being caught in the fall and taking the same damage as the mount takes from the Knockback (this takes no time). If the rider takes Knockback from an attack, he must make a Riding roll at -1 for every 2" (or fraction thereof) of Knockback taken or fall off the mount; if the roll succeeds, the rider takes no Knockback and retains his seat (otherwise he's knocked off the mount). If the mount is Knocked Out, it will fall, requiring the rider to make a roll as described above.

If either the mount or the rider performs a defensive Combat Maneuver such as Dodge or Block, the benefits of that Maneuver apply only to the character making them. A rider does not, for example, gain bonuses to his DCV because his mount Dodges.

If a mount moves at Noncombat velocity, the rider himself does not suffer Noncombat Movement penalties to CV.

The GM may apply modifiers of -1 to -5 to any Riding roll to reflect combat conditions, monsters, damage the mount has suffered, and anything else that might scare a mount.

Example: *Sir Gareth (DEX 18, SPD 4, 6" Running) rides his trusty steed Destrier (DEX 15, SPD 3, 12" Running) into battle. Destrier is a trained warhorse (PRE 15).*

In Segment 3, Sir Gareth has a Phase, but Destrier does not. Sir Gareth could attack someone if he wanted to, but he cannot move, because Destrier doesn't have a Phase. Sir Gareth opts to Hold his Action until Destrier can move. In Segment 4, on DEX 15, Destrier moves forward 12", carrying Sir Gareth with him. Because Destrier is a trained warhorse and is not making an attack, Sir Gareth need not make a Riding roll to get Destrier to go where he (Sir Gareth) wants, and he has his full OCV (-2 for riding a mount) when he attacks this Phase. Sir Gareth swings his sword at a foe, using his OCV 4 (6-2) to hit the enemy and wound him.

In Segment 6, Sir Gareth has a Phase, but Destrier does not. Because there is another enemy within HTH range nearby, Sir Gareth decides to use his Phase to attack. He rolls again with OCV 4 and hits and kills his target.

In Segment 8, Destrier has a Phase, but Sir Gareth does not. Sir Gareth has Destrier Hold his Action so they can act together in Segment 9. Had Sir Gareth chosen to have Destrier run forward, he could have made a Riding roll to get Destrier to go where he (Sir Gareth) wanted him to, but he would have been at ½ DCV until his next Phase.

In Segment 9, on DEX 15, Sir Gareth urges Destrier to charge towards an enemy knight. However, an enemy wizard has cast a fear spell over the battlefield, frightening Destrier, so Sir Gareth must make a Riding roll at -2 to get him to act. Sir Gareth succeeds, so Destrier makes a 6" Half Move towards the foe. Sir Gareth decides they will both attack. He makes another Riding roll, so Destrier can use his remaining Half Phase to attack. As Sir Gareth hacks at the enemy knight and misses (the GM imposed the -2 for the initial Riding roll on his OCV, to simulate the difficulty he's had controlling Destrier this Phase), Destrier tries to bite (HKA 1 point) the enemy knight's horse. Destrier rolls a 6 with his OCV 4, and hits! The enemy horse takes a minor wound; the GM has the enemy knight make a Riding roll to keep his horse under control (he succeeds easily).

In Segment 12, both Sir Gareth and Destrier have a Phase. Sir Gareth decides they will attempt to Coordinate their attack. He Holds his Action until DEX 15. The GM allows them

to Coordinate if both make 8- rolls; they succeed! As Destrier rears up and comes crashing down on the enemy knight, Sir Gareth uses the momentum of the maneuver to increase the force of his sword-blow (the GM grants him +1 Damage Class to simulate this); both hit, and the enemy knight falls lifeless to the ground.

Aerial Mounted Combat

In some campaigns, particularly High Fantasy games, mounted combat may take place in the air, pitting characters riding pegasi, dragons, hippogriffs, manticores, griffins, rocs, and other fantastical flying beasts against each other. The rules for mounted combat generally apply to aerial mounted combat without any changes, but GMs and players should keep several things in mind.

First, mounts using Flight have a Turn Mode, making them less maneuverable than horses. They an also fight in three dimensions, which may make it a little difficult to keep track of the combat or prepare for every enemy tactic.

Second, aerial mounted combat is more likely than ground mounted combat to involve Ranged attacks. If an aerial battle takes place wholly at Range, the GM may want to adapt the rules for Dogfight Combat (page 323 of the rulebook, or page 214 of *The Ultimate Vehicle*). If two or more aerial combatants close to HTH Combat range, resolve their fight normally.

Third, due to the danger of falling from high in the air, saddles for aerial mounts are usually sturdier and strap the rider in more strongly. This provides a +2 bonus to any Riding rolls to avoid being "unhorsed" by an attack (or a -2 OCV on attackers' Unhorse maneuvers), and acts as -2" Knockback Resistance in the event the campaign uses the Knockback rules. However, the saddle's firm grip should also hinder the character. The GM determines the exact drawback, but typical ones include: increasing the damage of attacks by +1-2 DCs, since characters can't "roll with" the blow to any degree; imposing a small penalty on DEX; or imposing a -1 to -2 penalty on CV.

Movement Skill Levels

If the character has any Skill Levels that apply to a particular type of movement, they have several uses:

First, he can use each Level to lower his Turn Mode by 1 (minimum of 0").

Second, each Skill Level provides a +1 to any roll required to land in, or otherwise move to, a particular hex.

Third, at the GM's option, the character can use each Skill Level to increase his acceleration or deceleration with his modes of movement (not with vehicles) by 1" per hex per Skill Level applied.

Fourth, at the GM's option, a character can use Levels with movement to improve his DCV if he Dodges or uses a Combat or Martial Maneuver that provides bonuses to DCV while moving.

Skill Levels with one mode of movement cost 2 Character Points per Level. Skill Levels that apply to any of a character's modes of movement cost 3 Character Points per Level.

chapter two:

FIGHTING

FIGHTING

HOW YOU WANT TO ROLL DICE IN COMBAT

Here's a quick summary of the core resolution mechanics in *HERO System* combat — in other words, how you want to roll the dice when fighting.

Skill Rolls, Characteristic Rolls, and Perception Rolls: You want to roll *low* on 3d6; the lower the roll, the more likely you are to succeed.

Attack Rolls: You want to roll *low* on 3d6 to hit; the lower you roll, the more likely you are to hit your target. This applies to physical combat, mental combat, and any other type of combat.

Damage/effect rolls: When you're rolling the dice of damage or effect for your attack, you want to roll *high.* The higher you roll, the more damage you do to the target, or the greater the effect your attack has.

This section covers all aspects of fighting and combat. It summarizes the combat process; discusses how characters hit their targets and how targets try to avoid being hit; and describes modifiers to combat, including various environmental conditions and the many Combat Maneuvers characters can use. Later sections describe how to determine damage, how to take damage, the effects of taking damage, and the Endurance cost for fighting.

The *HERO System* includes many optional combat rules. Although they add depth and flavor to combat, they can also complicate it and slow it down considerably. It's often best for new players and others who are learning the game to ignore the options and just concentrate on the basic rules. Also, the GM should consider using fewer optional rules when he has a lot of

players in a game, since combat goes faster without the options.

How Combat Works

Although combat in the *HERO System* involves a lot of rules and options, it's really quite simple. Once you read the rules and try them out, you shouldn't have any trouble running all sorts of battles. Here's the basic procedure:

1. The player decides what Action his character will perform in the character's Phase.

2. If the character attacks a target, he must make an Attack Roll to hit it.

a. If the Attack Roll fails, the attack misses and the character's Phase ends; the GM moves on to the next character who has a Phase in that Segment.

b. If the Attack Roll succeeds, the character must determine how much damage the attack does and/or what other effect it has. The character's Phase then ends, and the GM goes on to the next character who has a Phase in that Segment.

All combat can be divided into two types: *Hand-To-Hand Combat* (HTH) and *Ranged* Combat. HTH Combat is combat between characters who are standing in the same or adjacent hexes. Usually HTH Combat involves punching or melee weapons such as swords, not attacks like guns or energy bolts that can affect targets at a distance. Ranged Combat is any combat between characters who are not in the same or adjacent hexes; it requires weapons such as guns or bows, or Ranged attacks such as Energy Blasts or RKAs. Assuming special effects, common sense, and/or dramatic sense don't forbid it, a character can use a Ranged attack against a character in the same hex as he, or an adjacent hex.

Here's a checklist of the sequence of combat. If a character attacks someone, these steps take place. The following sections of the rulebook explain the steps.

COMBAT SEQUENCE CHECKLIST

1) Determine the attacker's Offensive Combat Value (OCV). Base OCV is DEX/3.

2) Determine the target's Defensive Combat Value (DCV). Base DCV is DEX/3 or is based on an object's size.

3) Attacker makes an Attack Roll (3d6). To hit the target, the attacker must roll less than or equal to (11 + attacker's OCV - target's DCV).

4) If the Attack Roll fails, the attack misses, and the attacker's Phase ends. The GM moves on to the next character who has a Phase in that Segment.

5) If the Attack Roll succeeds, the attacker hits; determine the damage and any effects of damage. The attacker's Phase ends; the GM moves on to the next character who has a Phase in that Segment.

Optional rules add more steps to the Combat Sequence. The GM may use any or all of the optional rules. If the GM uses all of them, combat goes much slower, but is much more realistic. Normally, the GM would only want to do this for very special battles — like a "trial by combat" or a one-on-one battle.

OPTIONAL COMBAT SEQUENCE CHECKLIST

1) Determine the attacker's OCV (see *Figuring OCV And DCV*).

2) Determine the target's DCV (see *Figuring OCV And DCV*).

3) Attacker makes an Attack Roll (3d6). To hit the target, the attacker must roll less than or equal to (11 + attacker's OCV - target's DCV).

4) Pay the END cost for the attack.

5) If the Attack Roll fails, the attack misses, and the attacker's Phase ends. The GM moves on to the next character who has a Phase in that Segment.

6) If the Attack Roll succeeds, the attacker hits; determine the damage and any effects of damage. To determine the additional effects of the damage:

a) Roll on the Hit Location table to find where the attack hit (this affects the damage result).

b) Check for Knockback: target may be Knocked Back or Down.

c) Check for a Wounded result; target makes EGO Roll to keep fighting next Phase.

d) Target may be Bleeding; keep track of blood loss.

e) Check for severity of wound; target may be Impaired or Disabled.

The attacker's Phase ends; the GM moves on to the next character who has a Phase in that Segment.

ATTACK ROLLS AND COMBAT VALUE

The first step in combat is to determine whether an attack hits its intended target. To do that, you need to know the attacker's OCV, the target's DCV, and the results of the attacker's Attack Roll.

The Basic Attack Roll

Whether an attack hits a target is determined by an Attack Roll made with 3d6. All Attack Rolls, regardless of the form of the attack, are determined as follows:

Attack Roll = (11 + Attacker's OCV - Target's DCV) or less

Example: *If the attacker's OCV is 8 and the target's DCV is 6, then the Attack Roll is 11 + 8 - 6 = 13 or less. If the attacker has an OCV of 7 and the target has a DCV of 10, then the Attack Roll is 11 + 7 - 10 = 8 or less.*

A result of 3 on an Attack Roll always succeeds, and may entitle the character to some extra benefit or advantage (perhaps some extra dice of damage, or an Armor Piercing effect). A result of 18 always fails, and may cause the character to incur some disadvantage (perhaps reducing his DCV for a Segment or two).

ALTERNATE ATTACK ROLL CALCULATIONS

If the GM doesn't want to reveal the target's DCV to the player, there are two methods he can use to determine whether the Attack Roll succeeds; both are mathematically identical to the standard method.

The first way is this:

(11 + Attacker's OCV - 3d6 roll) = the DCV the attack hit

Example: *If the attacker's OCV is 8 and he rolls a 13 for his Attack Roll, he has hit a DCV of 6 or less (11 + 8 - 13 = 6) — if the target has a DCV of 6 or less, it has been hit. If the attacker rolled a 7, he would hit a DCV of 12 or less.*

The second way is to treat the Attack Roll more like a Skill Roll. The attacker's "Attack Skill Roll" equals his OCV + 11, and how much he makes the roll by tells you the DCV he hit.

Example: *If an attacker has OCV 9, then his "Attack Skill Roll" equals (9 + 11 =) 20 or less. If he rolls a 13, he made the roll by 7, so he hits the target if the target is DCV 7 or lower. If he rolls an 8, he makes the roll by 12 and hits DCV 12 or less.*

ATTACK ROLL QUICK-REFERENCE TABLE

OCV \ Target's DCV	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	3	3	3
4	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	3	3
5	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3	3
6	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	3
7	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
8	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
9	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6	5
10	17	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7	6
11	17	17	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8	7
12	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9	8
13	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10	9
14	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**	10
15	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	**11**

ATTACK ROLL CALCULATION CHART

To speed play, players and GMs can use the accompanying chart to determine what number they need to roll to hit a target. Cross-reference the attacker's OCV (leftmost column) with the target's DCV (topmost row); the number indicated is the number the attacker must roll less than or equal to hit the target. Remember — a roll of 3 always hits and a roll of 18 always misses, regardless of relative CVs.

Calculating OCV and DCV

Obviously, the key factors in figuring out whether a particular Attack Roll succeeds and an attack hits its target are the OCV and DCV involved. Base OCV and DCV are figured as follows:

Base OCV = Attacker's DEX/3

Base DCV = Target's DEX/3

It's called *base* OCV and DCV because OCV and DCV can be modified by Skill Levels, the Range Modifier, Combat Modifiers, Combat Maneuvers, and other factors. If the result of the formula is a fraction, apply the standard *HERO System* rounding rules (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 7). For example, a character with DEX 20 has an OCV of 20/3 = 6.7, which rounds to 7.

COMBAT VALUE (CV)

Sometimes the rules use the general term *Combat Value,* or CV. CV reflects how good the character is at combat. A character's CV = DEX/3. The term CV may be used to discuss modifiers to both OCV and DCV.

The following checklists contain the steps for determining a character's OCV and DCV. It may look complex, but figuring OCV and DCV is actually quite easy. The following sections explain these steps.

OCV CHECKLIST

1) Determine base OCV (character's DEX/3).

2) Add any applicable Combat Skill Levels the character wishes to use to increase his OCV.

3) Apply any modifiers for the particular weapon or armor the character uses.

4) Apply any modifiers for the particular Combat Maneuver or Martial Maneuver the character uses.

5) Apply any Combat Modifiers.

6) Apply the Range Modifier (if applicable).

7) Apply any other modifiers.

8) Apply any modifiers that halve OCV (or otherwise reduce it by a fraction or percentage). A character's OCV can only be halved once, regardless of how many "halving" modifiers he's subject to.

DCV CHECKLIST

1) Determine base DCV (character's DEX/3).

2) Add any applicable Combat Skill Levels the character wishes to use to increase his DCV.

3) Apply any modifiers for the particular weapon, armor, or shield the character uses.

4) Apply any modifiers for the particular Combat Maneuver or Martial Maneuver the character uses.

5) Apply any Combat Modifiers.

6) Apply any other modifiers.

7) Apply any modifiers that halve DCV (or otherwise reduce it by a fraction or percentage). A character's DCV can only be halved once, regardless of how many "halving" modifiers he's subject to.

The DCV Modifiers Table lists some common situations that halve or otherwise affect a character's DCV, including the effect on Hit Location modifiers (if any).

Generally, penalties to DCV should not effect DECV. However, the GM may, in his discretion, apply some or all of them if it seems appropriate to do so. In some cases, such as with Haymaker and Rapid Fire, the GM may want to switch DCV penalties for DECV penalties.

REDUCING COMBAT VALUE TO ZERO

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

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

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

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

THE DURATION OF COMBAT VALUE MODIFIERS

Modifiers that alter a character's CV remain in effect from when they take effect until the beginning of the character's next Phase. For example, a SPD 3 character who takes a Recovery on his Phase in Segment 4 remains at ½ DCV until the beginning of his next Phase in Segment 8.

COMBAT SKILL LEVELS

Combat Skill Levels (CSLs), which are bought with Character Points, can modify the character's OCV, DCV or both. They're described on *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 53-54.

Depending on the type of Combat Skill Level, a character may use CSLs to increase his OCV, DCV, damage, and/or the damage done by an attack. A character must state how he's applying his Combat Skill Levels before he makes his Attack Roll. Usually, one CSL adds +1 to a character's OCV (or sometimes DCV, but Levels which improve DCV are rarer). Characters may also use some Combat Levels to increase damage: 2 CSLs add one Damage Class to an attack's damage, with certain restrictions (see pages 106-11).

As an optional rule, GMs can decide that Combat Levels do not apply to DCV in all cases. See *Combat Skill Levels: Optional Rules: DCV Levels, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 54, for details. Five-point Combat Levels with HTH Combat may be applied to DCV only against HTH attacks, not against Ranged attacks (and vice-versa).

RANGE MODIFIER

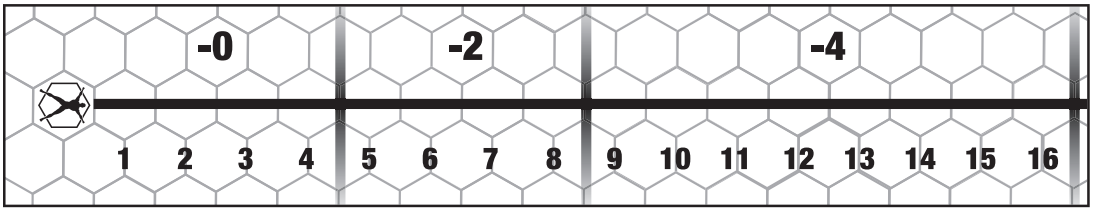
When a character attacks a target at Range, the attack is subject to the Range Modifier. This reflects the fact that it's harder to hit a target who's far away than one who's nearby. Among other reasons, this is because the target appears smaller at range — there is "less" of it to hit. Thus, a target who's half man-sized is just as hard to hit as one who's man-sized but twice as far away.

There is no Range Modifier out to 4" — it's as easy to hit any target up to 4" away as one who's adjacent to the attacker. After 4", any attack suffers a -2 OCV modifier. There's an additional -2 OCV Modifier for each doubling of the range thereafter: -4 OCV at 9-16", -6 OCV at 17-32", and so on.

If the GM wants additional detail, he can use the Optional Range Modifier Table, which breaks the modifier down into smaller incremental steps.

DCV MODIFIERS TABLE

Character Is	DCV	Hit Locations
Affected by EGO +30 Mental Illusion	½	½
Affected by PRE/EGO +20 Presence Attack	½	Normal
Affected by PRE/EGO +30 Presence Attack	-0	½
Affected by Flash/Darkness/Invisibility		
Ranged, makes Nontargeting PER Roll	Normal	Normal
HTH, makes Nontargeting PER Roll	-1	Normal
Ranged, fails Nontargeting PER Roll	½	Normal
HTH, fails Nontargeting PER Roll	½	Normal
Attacked from behind out of combat	½	½
Attacked from behind in combat	½	Normal
Braced	½	½
Bulky Focus, character is carrying	½	Normal
Climbing	½ to -0	Normal
DEX 1 or less	-0	½
Encumbered (depending on degree)	-0 to -5	Normal
Entangled	-0	½
Fighting in a cluttered or cramped area	-2	Normal
Grabbed by another character	½	Normal
Grabbing another character	½	Normal
In the water or swimming	-2	Normal
Intoxicated	-2	Normal
In zero gravity	½	Normal
Knocked Out	-0	½
On a narrow surface (tightrope, ledge)	-2	Normal
On ice, mud, or other slippery surfaces	-1	Normal
Prone	½	Normal
Recovering from being Stunned	½	½
Resisting Knockback with STR	½	Normal
Sleeping	-0	½
STR 0 (or lower)	½ (or lower)	Normal
STR -30 (or negative value of STR)	-0	½
Stunned	½	½
Subject to Multiple Attackers Bonus	-1 to ½	Normal
Surprised (in combat)	½	Normal
Surprised (out of combat)	½	½
Taking a Recovery	½	½
Underwater	-2	Normal
Using Autofire Skills	½	Normal
Using a Bulky Focus	½	Normal
Using Noncombat Movement	½	Normal
Using a Power with Concentration	½	Normal
Using Rapid Fire or Sweep	½	Normal

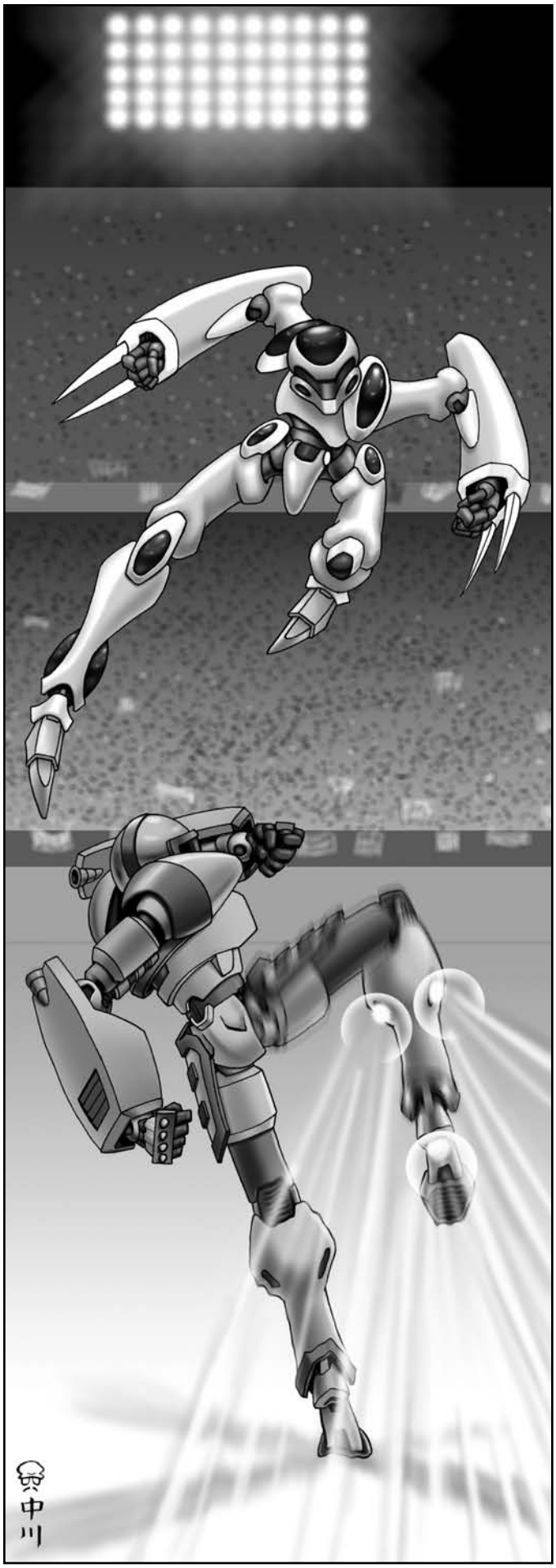


RANGE MODIFIER TABLE

Range	Modifier
Adjacent	-0
2-4"	-0
5-8"	-2
9-16"	-4
17-32"	-6
33"-64"	-8
65"-128"	-10
and so forth	

OPTIONAL RANGE MODIFIERS

Range	Modifier
Adjacent	-0
2-4"	-0
5-6"	-1
7-8"	-2
9-12"	-3
13"-16"	-4
17"-24"	-5
and so forth	



COMBAT SKILLS: BUILDING COMBAT-CAPABLE CHARACTERS

Because the *HERO System* offers so many options for character creation, it's sometimes difficult for a new player to figure out exactly how to build a character who can do what he has in mind. This is important when it comes to combat, where rules and numbers are the most prominent. So, here's a quick guide to the Skills and other abilities a character needs to be competent in combat.

Using Weapons: If a character has paid Character Points for a weapon or attack, no Skill is required for him to use it; he can use it automatically. In Heroic campaigns and other games where characters get weapons and equipment for "free" (*i.e.,* without paying Character Points for them), characters must buy *Weapon Familiarity* Skills to know how to use particular types of weapons. (See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 75.)

Shields: Characters don't need any special Skill to use a shield.

Building And Repairing Weapons: A character who wants to make and fix his own weapons should buy *Weaponsmith* (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 75). For information on how to create weapons using the *HERO System* rules, see Chapter Four.

Martial Arts: A character who has received special training in unarmed or armed combat styles can buy *Martial Arts.* Martial Maneuvers modify a character's CV and damage, and sometimes provide abilities ordinary Combat Maneuvers do not. (See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 64, and pages 56-82 of this book.)

Two-Weapon Fighting: A character who wants to fight with a weapon in each hand has several options. If he wants to restrict himself to attacking the same target, he can use two or more attacks or weapons in a multiple-power attack (see page 18). If he wants to be able to attack the same target or different targets, he can use the Combat Maneuvers *Sweep* and *Rapid Fire;* the special effect of the attack is that he's attacking with a weapon in each hand. (See pages 78, 81.) He may wish to buy Ambidexterity (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 87) to counteract the standard Off Hand penalty, or, if he is particularly adept at this form of fighting, should consider buying the *Two-Weapon Fighting* Skill (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 73). In some cases he can use *Reduced Penetration* (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 303) to simulate a two-weapon attack.

Combat Skill Levels: A character who's especially good at fighting may want to buy one or more Combat Skill Levels for some or all of his attacks. CSLs can improve OCV (and/or sometimes DCV), increase the amount of damage he can do, and have other effects. (See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 53-54.)

Accuracy At Range: A character who wants to be particularly accurate with Ranged attacks should consider buying Range Skill Levels (a type of Penalty Skill Level). RSLs counteract the Range Modifier (thus making it easier for a character to hit a target at a long distance). (See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 66, and page 37 of this book.)

You can easily calculate the Range Modifier by counting the distance in doublings starting at eight until the number is greater than or equal to the range. Then multiply the number of doublings by -2 OCV.

Example: *The attacker is standing 31" away from the target. The GM starts counting the distance "8, 16, 32 — that's three doublings, so your total penalty is -6 OCV."*

Skill Levels with a Ranged attack (like a pistol) can add directly to OCV (see *Combat Skill Levels*) to help offset the Range Modifier. Ranged Skill Levels, a type of PSL, can only be used to offset the Range Modifier. RSLs are also used for weapons that have especially good or bad performance over range. These bonuses or penalties have no effect on adjacent targets.

Example: *A .38 derringer (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised, *page 485) has an inherent -2 Range Modifier, meaning it's not very accurate for shots at long ranges. When Randall fires his derringer at an opponent 12" away, the total Range Modifier is -4 for Range, plus -2 for the derringer, for a total modifier of -6. If Randall used a rifle (Range Modifier +2) instead, the total OCV modifier would be -4 for range, +2 for the gun, giving a total of -2. Neither gun provides any bonus or penalty when used against adjacent targets, and RSLs never add to a character's OCV — they just offset the Range Modifier.*

EVENING THE ODDS: FIVE WAYS TO AFFECT YOUR FOES

When their characters face opponents who seem to take little or no damage from their attacks, players often get frustrated or upset. After all, it's not much fun to feel completely useless in combat. But don't get frustrated, get creative! Here are some ways to affect enemies who seem invulnerable or undefeatable:

1. Pushing: Assuming it's appropriate (see page 145), the character can Push his attack to do more damage than normal.

2. Surprise Move: A clever Surprise Move (page 50) often leads to an OCV bonus awarded by the GM. Use that bonus to hit the enemy in a vulnerable spot the character would otherwise have difficulty hitting.

3. Try Something Different: Instead of relying on his most powerful attack, the character should try one of his more obscure, but less powerful, abilities. Maybe the dragon can shrug off your Fireball spell, but you can blind him with a properly-placed application of your Create Light spell.

4. Use Your Environment: The battlefield can provide all sorts of interesting tactical options, ranging from things the character can throw at his enemies (or hit them with) to dangerous areas he can trick them into entering. For example, maybe a character could trip, trick, or throw a heavily armed and armored warrior into water or quicksand, effectively immobilizing him.

5. Use Your Skills: Rather than relying on raw power, perhaps the character can cleverly apply his skills to create a way to affect his foe. For example, when fighting a robot so heavily armored that it cannot be affected by gunfire, maybe a character could get close enough to use Lockpicking to open up a panel on the robot, creating a vulnerable spot.

Mental Combat

Most attacks use the ordinary Attack Rolls and CV already described. However, Mental Powers use *Ego Combat Value* (ECV) instead of the normal Combat Value. ECV can be divided into Offensive ECV (OECV) and Defensive ECV (DECV), just like CV. The Powers that use ECV are Ego Attack, Mental Illusions, Mind Control, Mind Link, Mind Scan, Telepathy, and powers bought with the Power Advantage *Based On ECV.* Ego Combat Value is determined using the following formula:

Ego Combat Value = EGO/3

Substituting ECV for CV, Mental Combat works just the same as normal combat. The Attack Roll is (11 + OECV - Target's DECV) or less on 3d6. 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.

A character using a Mental Power uses EGO instead of DEX to determine when he acts in the Phase. (However, his SPD still derives from his DEX.) 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, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 116-21, for more details regarding Mental Powers and Line Of Sight.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

Where and how combat takes place can affect characters' Attack Rolls. *Combat Modifiers* describe environmental conditions, character actions other than Combat Maneuvers that affect combat, certain Power Advantages, and other such factors that help or hinder a character in battle. Examples include a character attacking someone by surprise or ducking behind cover. The accompanying Combat Modifiers Table provides summary descriptions of the standard Combat Modifiers.

During game play, situations may occur that aren't covered in the Combat Modifiers — like firing upside down from a helicopter at midnight during a thunderstorm. In such cases, the GM should apply a modifier that seems reasonable, using the modifiers listed in the Combat Modifiers Table as guidelines. But remember, *HERO System* games simulate dramatic fiction, not "real life," so characters should often be able to accomplish incredible feats. In fact, the GM should give players a bonus for especially creative and exciting maneuvers, since they make things more fun for everybody.

Any DCV modifiers from Combat Modifiers modify a character's DCV versus all attacks, both HTH and Ranged.

EXPLANATION OF COMBAT MODIFIERS

The text below describes how the Combat Modifiers work.

In general, unless the text says that a Combat Modifier affects ECV, it does not. However, the GM should make exceptions whenever he feels it's appropriate to do so.

COMBAT MODIFIERS TABLE

Modifier	Notes	OCV	DCV
Area Of Effect Attack	Must hit hex's DCV (3; 0 if adjacent)	—	—
Autofire	More than one shot; 1 hit/2 points roll is made by	+0	-0
Bouncing An Attack	Requires 1 Combat Skill Level per bounce	+1 to +3	—
Concealment	By Hit Location Table or:		
	Target half hidden	-2	—
	Only target's head and shoulders visible	-4	—
Coordinated Attacks	Combine damage for purpose of Stunning	—	—
Encumbrance	Attacker is weighed down	—	-0 to -5
Environmental Conditions	Various ambient conditions or situations	Varies	Varies
Explosion	Treat like Area Of Effect	—	—
Multiple Attackers	-1 DCV/attacker after the first; must Coordinate	Varies	—
Off Hand	Using off hand	-3	—
Spreading An Attack	For one target, +1 OCV per -DC	Varies	—
	To hit multiple targets, -1d6 per additional hex	—	—
Surprised	In combat	—	x½
	Out of combat, take 2x Stun	—	x½
Surprise Move	GM decides	+1 to +3	—
Target A Hex	Must hit hex's DCV (3; 0 if adjacent)	—	—
Target Prone	May have Concealment	—	x½
Target Size	Fills 1 hex/2x human sized	+2	—
	Fills 2 hexes/4x human sized	+4	—
	Fills 4 hexes/8x human sized	+6	—
	½ human sized	-2	—
	¼ human sized	-4	—
	⅛ human sized	-6	—
Throw Object	Unbalanced, unaerodynamic object	-4	—
	Balanced or aerodynamic object	-2	—
	Balanced and aerodynamic object	-0	—
Unfamiliar Weapon	Character lacks appropriate Weapon Familiarity	-3	—
Weapon Size/Shape	GM decides	Varies	Varies

—: No change in the indicated value

Area Of Effect Attack

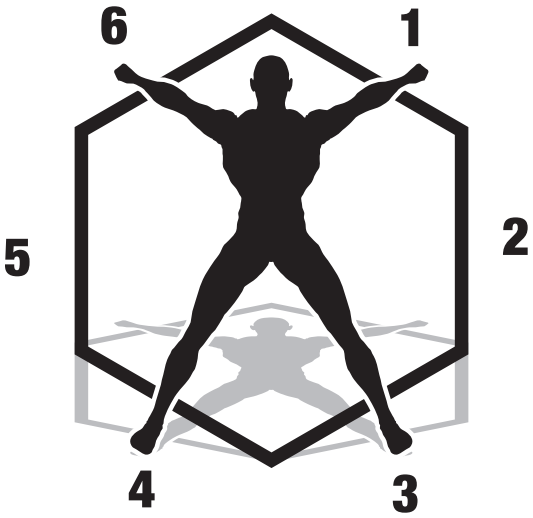
The rules in this section cover not only Area Of Effect attacks, but any attack directed against a point on the ground (in other words, a hex) rather than a person or an upright object. A character can also use an Area Of Effect attack to target a hex in the air, underwater, or the like (for example, to attack a parachutist or a submarine) — he's not limited to targeting hexes on the ground.

A character may make an Area Of Effect attack against either a hex or the target's normal DCV. Generally, it's easier to hit the hex the target's standing in, because the DCV of a hex is 3, or 0 if the hex is adjacent. Attacks aimed at a hex suffer the normal Range Modifier.

To use an Area Of Effect attack, a character picks the hex he's aiming for. This becomes the central hex of his Area Of Effect (or the first hex for an Area Of Effect [Cone] or [Line]). If he fails his Attack Roll, the center of the Area Of Effect misses the target hex by 1" for every 1 point which the Attack Roll fails by; the maximum miss distance is half the distance to the target. To determine the direction of the miss, the character should roll 1d6 and consult the accompanying diagram.

Usually, an Area Of Effect attack affects everything in the area — the character doesn't have to make a separate Attack Roll on each target (unless he has bought a version of the *Area Of Effect* Advantage that requires this). Even if the center of the Area Of Effect misses the target hex, the attacker may still catch his target with one of the hexes in the Area Of Effect, depending on how far the Area Of Effect misses by and in what direction.

Character Facing



Adjacent Hexes

As noted above, using an Area Of Effect attack against an adjacent hex means the hex has DCV 0 instead of DCV 3. "Adjacent" means just that — the hex right next to the hex the character is standing in when he begins or launches the attack. Unless the GM permits it, a character cannot buy Area Of Effect (One Hex) as an Advantage for his STR and then use it on other hexes (such as the hex at the end of a Move By/Through, or hexes reached with Stretching) at DCV 0 — those hexes have DCV 3 against his attack, since they're not "adjacent" to him when he begins the attack.

Autofire

Automatic weapons and Powers bought with the Advantage *Autofire* can fire more than one attack with a single Attack Roll. Thus, they can hit one target several times or several targets one time each.

AUTOFIRE AGAINST A SINGLE TARGET

To use an attack with Autofire on a single target, the character decides how many times he wants to fire the attack, up to a maximum of the number of "shots" he has purchased via the *Autofire* Advantage. He makes a normal Attack Roll. If the Attack Roll succeeds, the character hits the target one time; in addition, for every full 2 points by which he makes the Attack Roll, he hits the target an additional time. For example, if he needs a 12- to hit his target, and rolls an 8, he hits his target 3 times (once at 12, once at 10, and once at 8). A single target cannot be hit more times than the number of "shots" fired.

Example: *Andarra fires her Autofire (5 shots) blaster at an alien agent standing next to her. Andarra has a base OCV of 7, and the agent has a DCV of 5. Because the attack is point-blank, there's no Range Modifier. Andarra's Attack Roll is 11 + 7 - 5 = 13 or less. She rolls an 8, hitting the agent three times (once each at 13, 11, and 9).*

AUTOFIRE AGAINST MULTIPLE TARGETS

To use an attack with Autofire on multiple targets, a character declares the targets and counts a line of continuous hexes that includes all the targets. He suffers a -1 OCV penalty for each hex in the line. He must make a separate Attack Roll for each target fired at, and each target can only get hit one time. He must fire a minimum of one shot into each hex, even if no target occupies it (thus, a character with a 5-shot Autofire weapon could affect a maximum of five hexes, and, at most, five separate targets). If the character misses one of the targets, he may continue down the line of hexes attempting to hit other targets.

Example: *Andarra fires at three rock creatures in a five-hex continuous line. She suffers a -5 penalty to her OCV for firing at each target (-1 for each hex in the line). Andarra has an OCV of 6. Each rock creature has a DCV of 4. Andarra's first Attack Roll is 11 + 6 - 4 - 5 = 8 or less. Andarra rolls a 5, hitting the first rock creature (each target can only get hit once). Andarra rolls to hit the second rock creature and gets a 9, missing it altogether. Then she rolls a 6 and hits the third rock creature.*

ENDURANCE COSTS IN COMBAT

Here's a quick reference to help you remember Endurance (END) costs during combat.

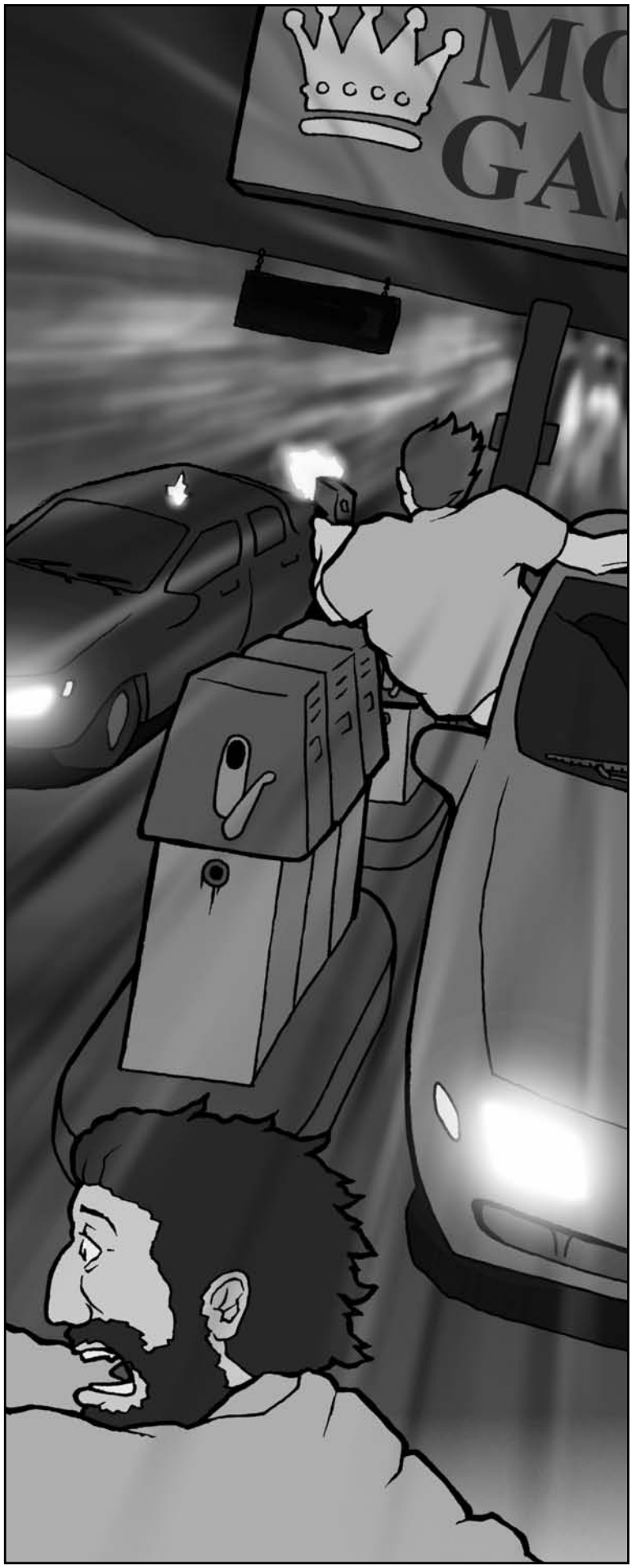
Strength (STR): STR costs 1 END per 10 points used (or 1 END per 5 STR in some Heroic games). For example, a superhero who uses STR 50 to punch spends 5 END to do so.

Powers: Most Powers cost 1 END per 10 Active Points in them. For example, an Energy Blast 8d6 (40 Active Points) costs 4 END each time it's used; an Energy Blast 8d6, Armor Piercing (60 Active Points) costs 6 END per use.

Some Powers, like Armor, Clinging, and Mind Link, do not cost END at all. See the individual Power descriptions for information (or the reference table on *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 129).

Powers that normally cost END may have the Advantage *Reduced Endurance* (which reduces the END cost to half or zero) or the Limitation *Increased Endurance Cost* (which makes them cost more END than normal).

Powers that don't normally cost END may have the Limitation *Costs Endurance,* which makes them cost END at the standard rate, and/or the Limitation *Increased Endurance Cost,* which makes them cost more END than normal.



AUTOFIRE DAMAGE

If a character uses a Combat Skill Level or other means to increase the damage done by an Autofire attack, the increased damage applies to every shot that hits the target. The GM may change this rule if he considers it unbalancing for a particular attack.

Each Autofire shot counts as a separate attack for purposes of determining Stunning — the individual Autofire shots do not add together to make a "single attack." For example, if a character with CON 20 takes 18 STUN and 14 STUN (after defenses) from two Autofire hits from the same burst of fire, he's not Stunned, since neither hit, by itself, did 21 or more STUN to him. (Of course, even though he's not Stunned, he may be Knocked Out.)

If a character with an Autofire attack Coordinates with other characters, regardless of whether they do or do not have Autofire attacks themselves, and he hits the target with two or more shots, add only the largest STUN total from any of the shots to his comrades' attack for purposes of determining the effects of Coordinating. The other shots still hit and cause damage to the target, they're just not counted for purposes of the Coordination rules.

If a character has an Autofire attack that's also Constant, it continues to affect the target with the same number of shots that hit him the first time, unless the GM rules otherwise based on the circumstances.

Characters may train themselves to overcome some of the restrictions on Autofire attacks. See *Autofire Skills, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 50, for more information.

AREA-EFFECTING AUTOFIRE ATTACKS

If a character has an attack that lets him Autofire an area-effecting attack (such as Darkness, or a power with the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantage), it's possible he might miss some shots even though he attacks against DCV 3. Here's how to resolve that.

For multiple shots against a single target, the Attack Roll determines how many shots hit the target. The rest are considered misses and have no effect on the target. You can randomly determine the "scatter" for the missed shots, adapting the rules on page 41 if you want, but the target should not suffer any additional damage. If the GM wants to go to a lot of extra trouble, he can determine the exact area affected by each missed attack, and if any of them overlap the target or another character, apply the damage as appropriate.

If attack misses entirely, make one calculation for where the shots would scatter to based on the normal rules, then apply the damage from that one attack to the affected area. Again, the rest are considered misses and have no effect on the area hit (which may or may not overlap to hit the target anyway), unless the GM wants to resolve each miss separately.

In either case, lots of other things may get destroyed in the area from the other "missed shots," but they shouldn't have any effect in game terms

— it's just a special effect — unless the GM wants to take the time and trouble to come up with a more "realistic" result.

For single shots against multiple targets, determine whether each hits, and for any misses determine the scatter normally.

Bouncing An Attack

A character with a Ranged Attack and Combat Skill Levels that apply to it can Bounce the attack off the right surface. The GM must decide what surfaces are appropriate for Bouncing a given type of attack. For each bounce the character wants the attack to perform, the character must use one CSL. (For example, if the character wants to ricochet his attack off of three walls to hit the target from behind, he has to allocate 3 CSLs to Bouncing.) Determine the Range Modifier for the attack by counting the length of the entire path of the attack. A Bounce can give the character a Surprise Move bonus (+1 to +3 OCV) if the target isn't expecting this type of attack (or possibly eliminate or reduce the effects of the *Concealment* Combat Modifier).

Example: *Marshal Graves squares off against some desperadoes who are holed up inside the Last Chance Saloon. One of them has hidden behind the bar. Graves wants to Bounce a shot from his Colt Peacemaker off one of the wooden shelves behind the bar to hit his target. The GM rules that this is possible. Graves has OCV 6 and three Combat Skill Levels with his Peacemaker; he's 4" from the shelf, and the shelf is 1" above the desperado. Graves must use one CSL to Bounce, and decides to use the other two to increase his OCV to 8. The Range Modifier depends on the entire path of the attack: 4" + 1" = 5", for a -2 Range Modifier. Thus, Graves has a final OCV of 6. However, the GM rules that he doesn't suffer the -4 OCV penalty he normally would for the desperado's Concealment behind the bar.*

Bouncing is most often used in Superheroic campaigns. However, it's appropriate for some types of Heroic campaigns as well. For example, in a *Dark Champions* campaign or a *Western Hero* campaign, characters might be skilled at bouncing bullets underneath cars or wagons, off of posts, and so forth to hit targets hiding behind cover.

Characters shouldn't be able to Bounce some Ranged attacks, such as frangible bullets and many types of spells; the same applies to arrows and throwing knives in campaigns stressing "realism." They can take a -¼ Limitation, *Cannot Be Bounced.* The GM may reduce this to -0 if Bouncing is uncommon in the campaign.

BOUNCED WEAPONS

Characters in some campaigns often use blunt missile weapons — thrown billy clubs, shields, weighted disks, and the like — against their enemies, carefully planning the ricochets to hit multiple targets (a form of Rapid Fire, usually) and/or to make the weapon bounce right back to the character so he can catch it and throw it again right away. In game terms, a character can do this with the Bouncing An Attack rules. He simply devotes one applicable Combat Skill Level to make the weapon return to his hand. The CSL doesn't improve his OCV with the attack, it just guarantees he threw the weapon with the right "spin" to make it ricochet back to his hand. (Alternately, the character can simply define the attack as a power without the *Focus* Limitation — thus ensuring, as a special effect, that it always "bounces back" to him, because the rules let him use the attack again and again without anyone being able to take it away from him.)

Concealment

Targets who are partly Concealed or "behind cover" are harder to hit. If a target is half Concealed (like a person behind a table or leaning around a corner), the attacker suffers a -2 OCV. If only a person's head and/or shoulders are showing (like someone peering out of a door), the attacker suffers a -4 OCV. This affects both Ranged and HTH attacks, though Concealment is most likely to come into play during Ranged Combat.

CONCEALMENT WITH HIT LOCATIONS

If the campaign uses the optional Hit Location Table (page 118), Concealment works differently. If a character has some cover from an opponent, the GM should decide what Hit Locations are covered. For example, a character standing behind a desk would have his feet, legs, and (perhaps) abdomen covered; similarly, a character firing a pistol around a corner would only be exposing his head and one hand, arm, and shoulder. Once the GM determines what's Concealed, combat occurs normally. If an attack hits the Concealed character, roll the Hit Location. If the Hit Location rolled is protected by Concealment, the attack strikes the cover instead. This usually means the target takes no damage, although if the Concealment was lightweight or the attack was powerful, the attack may "blow through" the Concealment and still have enough power to damage the target anyway.

Example: *Andarra has just drawn her blaster on a squad of Imperial Star Marines. Not liking the odds, she ducks behind a rock before firing. The well-trained Marines return fire. Because the rock protects roughly half of Andarra, the Marines receive a -2 OCV to their Attack Rolls.*

Alternately, the GM could have the Marines attack normally and then roll Hit Locations. Only Andarra's head, arms, shoulders, and chest are exposed, so any Hit Location roll of 12 or more hits the rock, doing no damage to her.

OPTIONAL EXPANDED CONCEALMENT RULES

Some GMs may find the basic Concealment rules — -2 or -4 OCV — insufficiently detailed for their campaigns. Gamemasters who want expanded rules for Concealment should use the modifiers listed in the accompanying table.

OPTIONAL EXPANDED CONCEALMENT MODIFIERS

Percentage Of Body Concealed	OCV Modifier
1-10% (nearly all of the body showing)	-0
11-24% (two-thirds of the body showing)	-1
25-50% (half the body showing)	-2
51-74% (one-third of the body showing)	-3
75-90% (head and shoulders showing)	-4
91-100% (head showing)	-8

FIRING INTO MELEE

Gamemasters may, if they wish, use the normal Concealment rules when a character tries to make a Ranged Attack against a character in the middle of a HTH Combat with one or more other persons ("firing into melee," in gaming parlance). In this situation, the GM decides how much "cover" the other bodies in the battle provide, based on the number of combatants, how quickly they're moving around, their relative sizes, and other factors. The attacker then makes his Attack Roll against the target's DCV, including the OCV penalty from Concealment. If the roll misses *solely as a result of the Concealment OCV penalty* (*i.e.,* it misses by less than or equal to the penalty), then the attacker may have actually hit the cover — one of the other people in the melee. The GM decides which combatant is the potential target (either randomly, or based on his evaluation of the fighters' positions when the attacker fired). The attacker must make another Attack Roll against that target, using only his base OCV from DEX (no bonuses from Combat Skill Levels, Combat Maneuvers, or the like apply). If that Attack Roll hits, the attacker's shot has accidentally hit someone other than his intended target!

Example: *Lt. Andy Barrett, a skilled sniper, wants to help out the other soldiers in his squad, who have run out of ammunition while assaulting a terrorist training camp and are now involved in a swirling hand-to-hand melee with the terrorists. He decides to shoot the terrorist who's fighting his friend Sgt. Ortiz. Barrett has an OCV of 10, and the terrorist he targets has DCV 6. The GM decides that, based on the swirling confusion of the combat, the terrorist has a little more than half cover — ordinarily a -3 OCV penalty for Barrett. However, the GM also thinks that the fact the terrorist's a little larger than Ortiz helps Barrett, so he reduces the penalty to -2 OCV, giving Barrett a final OCV of 8.*

Unfortunately, Barrett rolls a 14, so he misses by 1. He missed by less than or equal to the Concealment penalty of 2, so he may hit someone else in the battle. Since there are six other combatants (Ortiz, Private Michaels, and four terrorists), the GM rolls 1d6 (1-2 for Barrett's friends, 3-6 for the terrorists). He gets a 4 — the potential victim is another terrorist, fortunately! Barrett uses his base OCV of 6 to make an Attack Roll against the terrorist's DCV of 5. He rolls a 10, a hit! At least he didn't hit his friends....

Coordinated Attacks

This Combat Modifier allows two or more characters to "coordinate" so their attacks are more effective against a single opponent.

HOW TO COORDINATE

Before any two (or more) characters can Coordinate attacks, at the very least they must have fought together or trained together in the past. This training can be "in the field" during typical combats, or the characters can deliberately spend time practicing Coordinating their attacks. At the GM's option, characters may have to buy an Agility Skill, *Teamwork,* to reflect their ability to Coordinate properly (see the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 72). A character cannot "Coordinate" with himself.

To Coordinate attacks, the characters must attack on the same DEX on the same Phase (the attacks are considered to occur simultaneously). Faster characters may have to Hold their Actions to wait for comrades who have lower DEXs. If the combat is particularly confusing or noisy, the GM might require the characters to make a PER Roll to notice the cue to attack.

When characters try to Coordinate, they must make an appropriate Skill or Characteristic Roll to see if they succeed. If the characters have the *Teamwork* Skill, use it (with appropriate modifiers to reflect the amount and quality of their practice together). Otherwise, use a DEX Roll or Tactics roll, with negative modifiers to simulate the characters' lack of experience fighting together (a flat 8- chance to Coordinate may be appropriate in some situations).

EFFECTS OF COORDINATING

If two or more characters successfully Coordinate, there are several effects. First, Coordinating attacks may make the target easier to hit (see *Multiple Attackers*, below). Second, Coordinated attacks are more likely to Stun the target. When two or more attackers successfully Coordinate their attacks, each of them rolls his damage as usual for the type of attack he used. However, any STUN damage the target takes after applying his defenses adds together for the purpose of determining whether he's Stunned. If the Knockback rule is being used, Knockback is determined normally for each attack, then added together.

Typically, characters can Coordinate any types of attacks that do damage. However, Mental Powers that do damage, such as Ego Attacks, generally cannot be Coordinated with attacks that do physi-

cal damage (the GM must decide when attacks can be Coordinated based on the nature of the Powers involved, the attacks' special effects, and the circumstances). Mental Powers that do damage can be Coordinated with other Mental Powers that do damage in the usual fashion (to "coordinate" continuing-effect Mental Powers, use the rules for complementary Mental Powers, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 119). When Coordinating the effects of Powers like Dispel, which don't directly cause damage, add the effect rolls together, or use some other common-sense result.

In the event one or more characters involved in a Coordinated attack uses an attack or power that somehow lowers the target's DCV, the lowering does not apply to any attacks used in that Coordinated attack. Depending on how the lowering works, it might apply in later Segments, or to other attacks (not a part of the Coordinated attack) that take place in the same Segment but after the Coordinated attack occurs.

Example: *Arkelos the mage (SPD 3, DEX 18) and Chiron the rogue (SPD 4, DEX 20) attack a dragon who just incinerated their friend the paladin. They decide to Coordinate their attacks. On Segment 6, Chiron holds his attack. On Segment 8, Arkelos has a Phase, and on DEX 18, they both attack (Chiron uses his Held Action). Chiron's sword does 15 STUN after defenses, Arkelos's flame bolt does 18 STUN after defenses. The damage is totaled for the purposes of seeing whether the dragon is Stunned. Since 15 + 18 = 33 STUN is greater than the dragon's 28 CON, the dragon is Stunned. Whew!*

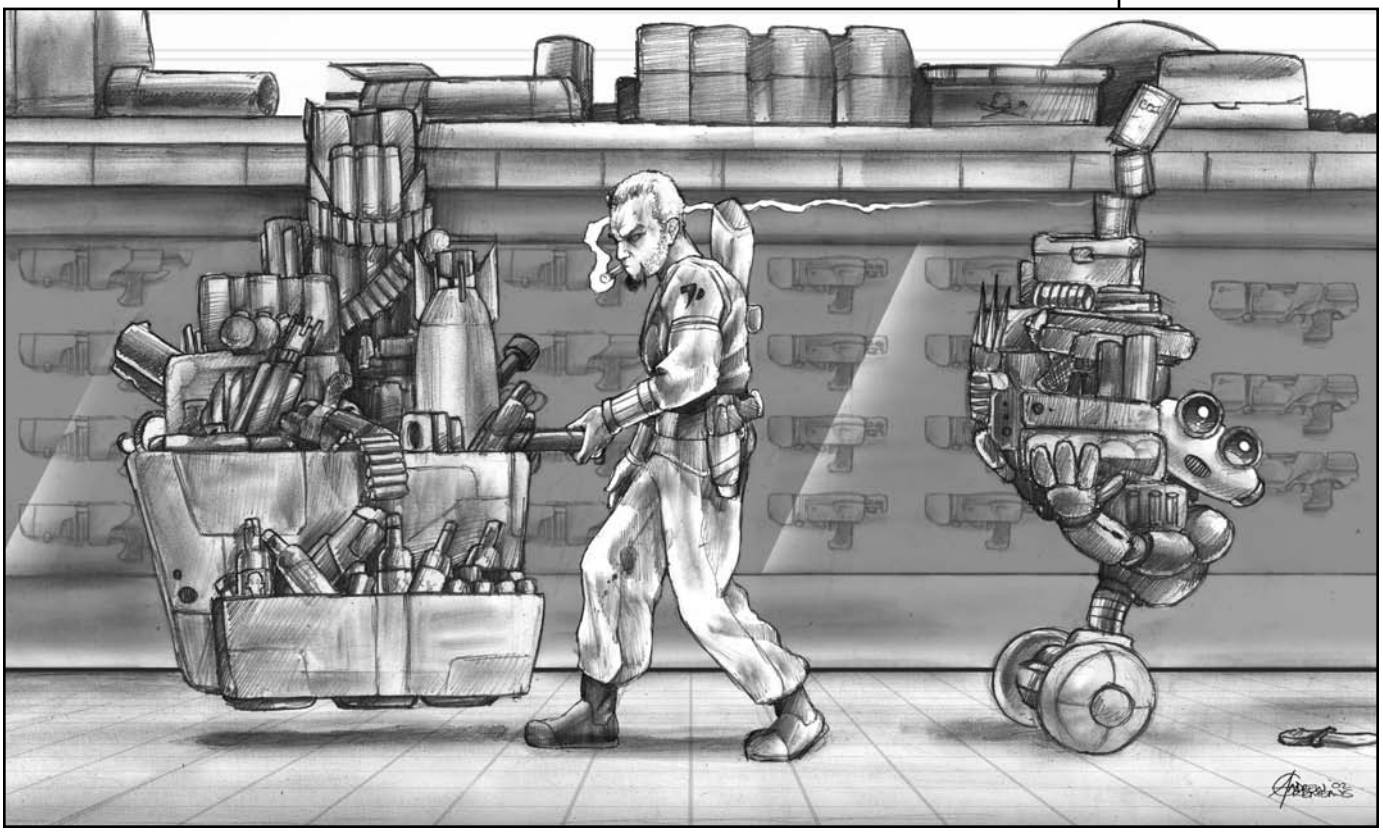
Coordinating works the same even if different types of attacks are used (such as a Normal Damage attack and a Killing Damage attack, or a Normal Damage attack and a Drain), or if the campaign uses the Hit Location rules. Each attack applies against its relevant defenses in the regular manner, modified by Hit Locations as appropriate. When you determine the total STUN damage the target takes after applying the relevant defenses to reduce each attack's damage, add it together to find out if he's Stunned.

Because the point of Coordinating is to improve the chances of Stunning a target, characters cannot Coordinate attacks that don't do STUN damage (or the types of damage described above). For example, characters can't Coordinate their Grabs to somehow obtain a "better" Grab effect.

Encumbrance

A character who carries around heavy equipment may become *encumbered,* and therefore not able to fight and move as well. The character will also find it difficult to perform acts requiring agility (*i.e.,* a DEX Roll). The Encumbrance rules should only be used in Heroic campaigns (except regarding movement, in which case they also apply to Superheroic campaigns).

To determine Encumbrance, calculate the total weight of all the items a character carries. This includes both worn items (such as his armor, clothing, backpack, and sheathed weapons) and any items carried in his hands. Since a character often carries around a fair number of miscellaneous items, he should probably add one or two kilograms to the total. The GM must



ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

Total Weight Carried	DCV/ DEX Roll	Movement	END Cost per Turn
Up to 10%	-0	—	0
10-24%	-1	—	0
25-49%	-2	-1"	1
50-74%	-3	-2"	2
75-89%	-4	-4"	3
90-100%	-5	-8"	4

Notes

Total Weight Carried: A percentage of the total weight a character can lift, as indicated by the Strength Table (page 34). For example, a character with a 20 STR can lift 400 kilograms; if carrying 200 kilograms, he would suffer a -3 to DCV and DEX Rolls.

Movement: Moving characters can carry up to 24% of the weight they can carry with their STR at no penalty. However, carrying more than that slows them down. The Movement column shows the impact that carrying 25% or more of their carrying capacity has on their movement. The number of inches listed in the table is subtracted from the character's movement rate. As explained on page 364, characters can use their movement to improve their STR; this may allow them to overcome some or all effects of encumbrance at less cost in velocity.

END Cost Per Turn: When Encumbered in combat, the character uses this much END per Turn in addition to any other END used for STR, Powers, and the like. Additionally, you can use this number as the amount of Long Term END he loses every hour which he carries that much weight.

A character must pay the END cost for Encumbrance in his first Phase of each Turn. As a default, he pays the entire END cost in his first Phase, but the GM may, if he wishes, divide the END cost equally over the character's Phases for the Turn. At the GM's option, characters so Encumbered that they must pay END do not get Post-Segment 12 Recoveries (and possibly not even normal Recoveries) until they get rid of enough weight to remove the penalty, or sit down and do nothing but rest.

ENCUMBRANCE TABLE II

	Encumbrance (Total Weight Carried)					
STR	0-10%	11-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75-89%	90-100%
5	0-5.4	5.5-12.4	12.5-24.5	24.6-37.0	37.1-44.5	44.6-50.0
8	0-7.5	7.6-18.0	18.1-36.8	36.9-55.5	55.6-66.8	66.9-75.0
10	0-10.0	10.1-24.0	24.1-49.0	49.1-74.0	74.1-89.0	89.1-100.0
13	0-15.0	15.1-36.0	36.1-73.5	73.6-111.0	111.1-133.5	133.6-150.0
15	0-20.0	20.1-48.0	48.1-96.0	96.1-148.0	148.1-178.0	178.1-200.0
18	0-30.0	30.1-72.0	72.1-147.0	147.1-222.0	222.1-267.0	267.1-300.0
20	0-40.0	40.1-96.0	96.1-196.0	196.1-296.0	296.1-356.0	356.1-400.0
23	0-60.0	60.1-144.0	144.1-294.0	294.1-444.0	444.1-534.0	534.1-600.0
25	0-80.0	80.1-192.0	192.1-392.0	392.1-592.0	592.1-712.0	712.1-800.0

0-10%: No Encumbrance penalty
11-24%: -1 DCV/DEX Rolls
25-49%: -2 DCV/DEX Rolls, -1" movement, 1 END per Turn
50-74%: -3 DCV/DEX Rolls, -2" movement, 2 END per Turn
75-89%: -4 DCV/DEX Rolls, -4" movement, 3 END per Turn
90-100%: -5 DCV/DEX Rolls, -8" movement, 4 END per Turn
Greater than 100%: Character cannot move or take other actions
All weights listed are in kilograms (kg).

decide the weight of any items not listed. Compare this total weight to Encumbrance Table I. Encumbrance Table II provides a quick reference suitable to most Heroic campaigns.

Because the Encumbrance movement penalties can become severe, GMs may wish to modify the rules slightly for characters who only have the standard 2" of Swimming. For any level of Encumbrance from 50-89%, a character in the water cannot move, but can tread water and keep himself afloat by paying the END for his Swimming and his Encumbrance. At 90% Encumbrance and above, the character can only tread water by paying *double* those END costs. At 100%+, the character sinks like a stone.

Environmental Conditions

The Environmental Conditions Table lists some typical environmental conditions and the problems they can cause in combat. In addition to the CV and DC penalties (which apply to all forms of attack unless otherwise noted) and other penalties listed in the table, GMs may also wish to restrict the use of certain Maneuvers or other Actions in particular conditions. For example, characters fighting in hip-deep water usually can't use kicks.

Characters can eliminate the combat penalties for a particular type of environment with the Skills listed in the table or by purchasing the Talent *Environmental Movement* (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 89).

CLIMBING

When a character makes easy climbs (such as climbing up or down a ladder), he suffers -1 DCV, but no penalty to OCV or DCs. More difficult climbs, including most climbs that require the character to make a roll with his *Climbing* Skill, reduce his DCV by up to half and subtract 2 DCs from all attacks.

In either case, a character can eliminate these penalties with a successful Climbing roll. This roll is separate from any roll needed to keep climbing or not fall; typically it takes no time, but the GM may require the character to use up to a Half Phase Action to make it in appropriate circumstances. If the character fails the roll, the penalties still apply; if he fails it badly, he probably falls as well.

CLUTTERED OR CRAMPED CONDITIONS

In cluttered or cramped areas, characters are typically at -2 DCV, -1 OCV (if not worse). Based on the type of area, a character may not be able to use certain types of maneuvers (such as Flying Kicks, maneuvers with the FMove Element, and various kinds of kicks and sweeps) at all. Characters can eliminate these penalties by succeeding with an Acrobatics roll.

Weapon Lengths And Enclosed Spaces

Long weapons aren't much good when a character's fighting in an enclosed, cramped, or cluttered space, and this optional rule simulates

that fact. The accompanying table lists a variety of different fighting environments and their effects on different types of weapons. If used, these rules replace the general rules for cramped and cluttered spaces described above, though the GM may still allow a character to reduce or eliminate the penalties if he succeeds with an Acrobatics roll.

FALLING AND FLYING

Every now and then a character may have to fight during a long fall. The parachuting sequence from the James Bond movie *Moonraker* probably provides the classic example of this sort of thing — two falling characters fighting for a single parachute.

Falling characters are severely restricted in their use of martial arts and other forms of attack. Attacks requiring them to use their legs — just about all kinds of kicks and sweeps, for example — are difficult or impossible to perform, as are most throws and dodges. Punches or hand attacks are allowed, and grappling and choking attacks are the easiest of all (and often the most logical choice, too). There's no way to eliminate these penalties.

In some situations characters need to remember the possibility of doing Knockback, something they'll often want to avoid — if your opponent has the only parachute, you want to stick close to him and take it from him, not knock him away from you.

Parachuting characters often use the reverse of these rules — punching and grappling attacks are not really possible, but some kicks are. The GM should determine what maneuvers a character can use based on the situation.

Refer to *Zero Gravity,* below, for information about fighting in situations where there is no gravity at all.

INTOXICATION

Intoxicated, drunk, stoned, or similarly impaired characters are at -2 OCV and -2 DCV.

NARROW SURFACES

Characters sometimes have to fight on narrow surfaces such as tightropes, tiny ledges, tree branches, and the like. In this situation, a character is at -2 DCV and -2 DC to all attacks; he can eliminate these penalties by succeeding with an Acrobatics roll.

POOR FOOTING

Sometimes characters find themselves fighting in environments with poor footing: ice, rain-slicked rocks, mud, rowboats, and the like. In this situation, a character suffers -1 DCV and -1 DC to all attacks, but can eliminate these penalties with a successful Breakfall roll.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS TABLE

Condition	Problem; Modifiers
Climbing	During easy climbs (such as a ladder), characters suffer -1 DCV; more difficult ones can reduce DCV by up to half and subtract 2 DCs from all attacks.
Cluttered, Cramped	In cluttered or cramped areas, characters are typically at -2 DCV, -1 OCV (if not worse); an Acrobatics roll eliminates these penalties.
Intoxication	Intoxicated or drunk characters are at -2 OCV and -2 DCV.
Narrow Surfaces	Characters fighting on tightropes, tiny ledges, tree branches, and other narrow surfaces are at -2 DCV and -2 DC to all attacks; an Acrobatics roll eliminates these penalties.
Poor Footing	When footing is poor — on ice, rain-slicked rocks, mud, or the like — characters suffer -1 DCV and -1 DC to all attacks; a Breakfall roll eliminates these penalties.
Water	Characters fighting underwater or while swimming are at -2 DCV and -2 DCs to all attacks unless they make an appropriate Skill Roll or have TF: SCUBA. A character who stands in water while he fights is at -2 DCV (and typically also suffer Poor Footing penalties) unless he makes a Breakfall roll.
Zero-Gravity	Characters in Zero-G are typically at -3 OCV and/or -3 DCs for any attacks that require them to have their feet on the ground (such as kicks) or which need the momentum of gravity to function properly (such as some punches or throws). Characters are also usually at ½ DCV. Characters can eliminate some or all of these penalties with a successful PS: Zero-G Operations roll.

WATER

Characters fighting underwater or while swimming have -2 DCV and -2 DCs to all attacks unless they make an appropriate Skill Roll or have TF: SCUBA. A character who stands in water while he fights is at -2 DCV (and typically also suffer Poor Footing penalties) unless he succeeds with a Breakfall roll.

See page 152 for expanded rules for underwater adventuring.

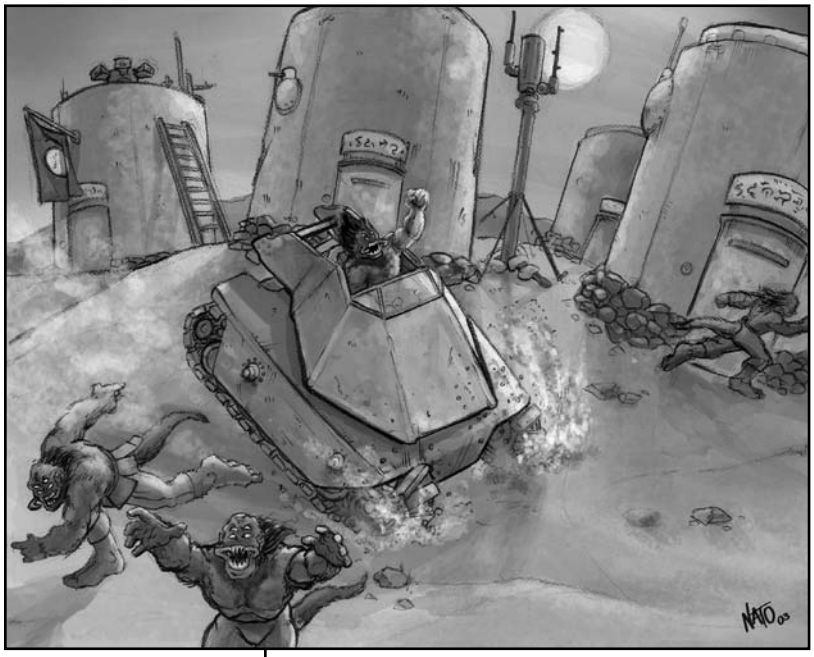
ZERO GRAVITY

Pages 280-81 of *Star Hero* have detailed rules about the effects of zero gravity on character actions. The standard Skill Roll and OCV penalty for all activity in zero gravity (*a.k.a.* free fall) is -3; the standard DCV penalty is ½ DCV. Characters can overcome this penalty in two ways. First, they can buy the *PS: Zero-G Operations* Skill (*Star Hero,* page 45). This method is the most "realistic," and is

WEAPONS IN ENCLOSED SPACES

Environment	Unarmed	Short Weapons	Medium Weapons	Long Weapons	Extra Long Weapons
Extremely Cramped (coffin, latrine)	-2	-3	N/P	N/P	N/P
Very Cramped (3' hallway)	-1	-2	-3	N/P	N/P
Cramped (room crowded with furniture or debris, 4-7' hallway, 3' doorway)	—	—	-1	-2	-3
Partly Cramped (room with 6' ceiling, 8-10' hallway, 4'+ doorway)	—	—	—	-1	-2

—: No effect on OCV.
Number: A penalty to the character's OCV with the weapon.
N/P: Use of this weapon is not possible.



best suited for characters used to normal gravity but trained for zero-G work. Second, they can buy the *Zero-G Training* form of Environmental Movement (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 89-90). This costs 4 Character Points and automatically cancels all Skill Roll and CV penalties caused by zero-G. This method is most appropriate for characters born to a zero-G environment, or who spend virtually all of their time in one.

Zero Gravity And HTH Combat

The penalties for Ranged Combat in zero-G are as noted above, but HTH combat requires some additional explanation and rules. These penalties all apply when the character is in free fall in zero-G. If he's braced against a surface (for instance, if he wears magnetic shoes and stands on a steel surface), they do not apply.

OCV Penalties: A character suffers a -3 OCV penalty for all attacks requiring him to have his feet on the ground (such as kicks in Martial Arts packages) performed in zero-G. In some situations the GM may rule that characters cannot use these maneuvers at all. He also suffers a -3 OCV penalty for other HTH attacks, reflecting the general difficulty he has moving and contorting his body in zero-G.

DCV Penalties: Characters are at ½ DCV when in zero-G.

Damage Penalties: All HTH Combat attacks suffer a minimum of a -1 DC damage penalty when performed in free fall, as they normally benefit from the character's secure contact with a surface or momentum arising from a leap from a surface. These penalties are usually higher (-3 DC), but the GM can adjust the penalty as he sees fit.

Action/Reaction (Knockback): Combat in free fall should always use the Knockback rules, even if the campaign normally only uses Knockdown rules.

Knockback becomes a very serious problem in zero-G combat. When a character takes Knockback, he continues to move that many inches per Segment until he hits something. If the character has a safety line or tether, he moves until he reaches the limit of the rope and stops. Without a tether, there's a real danger of floating off helplessly into deep space. Characters in that situation can make a DEX Roll once per Phase to attempt to grab objects in adjacent hexes and thereby keep from flying away. Victims wearing any sort of zero-G flight pack can bring themselves to a stop using their thrusters.

For characters in free fall, roll 1d6 less than normal to determine Knockback, as if they were flying — which, in essence, they are. Moreover, instead of applying Knockback just to the target, divide it between attacker and target. If an attack does 4" Knockback, then the target doesn't sail back 4" — both attacker and target sail away from one another 2".

Grappling: Grabbing someone negates OCV penalties for strikes and the Action/Reaction effect (when a character has Grabbed someone and hit him, doing Knockback, neither of them goes anywhere).

Explosion

Explosion attacks are aimed at a hex, so you handle the Attack Roll identically to an Area Of Effect attack (see *Area Of Effect Attack,* above). Explosions do full damage to the center hex; they lose DCs per hex from the center hex. Always subtract the dice that rolled the highest numbers first. See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 258 for more information.

Multiple Attackers

This optional rule reflects the fact that when there are a lot of attackers fighting a single defender, it's harder for the defender to evade their attacks. To gain a Multiple Attacker Bonus, the attackers must Coordinate their attacks (see *Coordinated Attacks,* above). If the attackers successfully Coordinate, the defender suffers a -1 DCV for every attacker after the first, down to a minimum of ½ DCV. The attackers can fight at Range, HTH, or a combination of both. The DCV penalty applies only against those opponents who Coordinate their attacks; the character's DCV against other attacks is determined normally. A character who has the Skill *Defense Maneuver* (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 57) can avoid the effects of Multiple Attackers.

A character attacked by Multiple Attackers can choose to ignore some of them to concentrate on a more dangerous opponent. In this case he gets his full DCV against the single opponent, but is ½ DCV against all the other Multiple Attackers.

Characters with Mental Powers may obtain a Multiple Attackers Bonus for ECV when using any Mental Power with which they can Coordinate (see above).

Multiple Attackers is an optional rule. It can be particularly inappropriate for a martial arts campaign or one based on the swashbuckling

exploits of the Three Musketeers, since generally such characters are *supposed* to be able to take on large numbers of less skilled opponents and defeat them without getting hurt. The same applies to cinematic *Dark Champions* campaigns where characters often seem to survive fusillades of bullets, or in Fantasy campaigns where it's common for a single skilled warrior to fight and defeat several lesser swordsmen at once.

Example: *Five VIPER agents attack Nighthawk. Because they find Nighthawk almost impossible to hit, they decide to try for a Multiple Attacker Bonus. (This is made simpler because all VIPER agents have DEX 14 and SPD 3.) On Segment 4, they Coordinate their attacks (this is easy for them because they've all trained together and purchased the Teamwork Skill) and attack as one. Nighthawk receives a -4 to his DCV, and will probably be hit.*

Off Hand

An attack made with a weapon used in the character's "off" hand suffers a -3 OCV penalty. If the character is right-handed, this applies to weapons held in the left hand, vice-versa for left-handed characters. The Talent *Ambidexterity* eliminates this penalty.

The Off Hand rules only apply to weapons — a character can punch someone with either of his fists and suffer no OCV penalty for the "off" hand. However, GMs interested in fairness or "realism" may want to apply the Off Hand penalty to barehanded attacks like punches (and many Martial Maneuvers).

This optional rule is usually used only in Heroic campaigns or other games where characters buy Weapon Familiarity and similar Skills instead of paying Character Points for their weapons and equipment.

Spreading An Attack

This optional rule allows a character to "spread" a Ranged attack to get a better chance to hit a target. Effectively, the character "widens" the attack at the cost of doing less damage. The character does -1 Damage Class for every +1 OCV he wants. He makes his Attack Roll against the target's DCV.

Alternately, a character may Spread his attack to hit more than one target. The character loses 1 Damage Class for each hex he wants to fill with his attack. The hexes must be adjacent, and typically in a straight line as well (the attack could therefore hit a hex, and the hexes on either side, but not the hex behind). The character must make a separate Attack Roll against each target, using that target's DCV; he receives no OCV bonus for Spreading (his "bonus" is the ability to attack more targets). A Spread attack can be Missile Deflected or Reflected.

With either form of Spreading, the character must pay the full END cost for the attack, even though it's not doing full damage.

Spreading is most commonly used with Energy Blast, but characters may also Spread other types of Ranged attacks (unless the GM rules otherwise). The only Mental Power characters can Spread is Ego Attack (and, at the GM's discretion, some Ranged attacks bought *Based On ECV*).

A character can only Spread a multiple-Power attack if he can Spread all the powers used in the attack. He must Spread both of them equally, and though the Spreading reduces both powers' DCs, he only gets one OCV bonus. For example, if a character has an Energy Blast and an RKA, he can reduce both by 3 DCs to obtain +3 OCV with them in a multiple-Power attack (he only gets +3, not +6).

Spreading is usually only used in Superheroic campaigns. Characters may not spread attacks that affect an area (such as Change Environment, Darkness, Images, or any power with the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantages), nor any attack with the *Beam* Limitation.

Example: *Starburst has an Energy Blast 10d6. He decides to Spread his attack to get a better chance to hit his target. He spreads his attack by 2d6. This gives him a +2 OCV, but he only does 8d6 damage if he hits. He pays the full 5 END that his Energy Blast normally costs.*

Starburst now wants to try to hit several agents with one shot. The agents, not being particularly clever, have conveniently lined up shoulder to shoulder, six agents in three adjacent hexes. Starburst spreads his attack by 3d6, thus filling up all three hexes. Starburst must now roll his Attack Roll against each agent. Each agent he hits takes 7d6 damage. Starburst pays the full 5 END for his Energy Blast.

SPREADING STRENGTH

Some GMs may prefer to let characters Spread their STR as a way of representing an "arm sweep," massive fists, or the like. In this case, the character may only Spread for one hex (unless he had Stretching or some other ability the GM believes justifies a broader Spread).

Additionally, in some cases the GM might let a character use the Spreading rules for his STR to reflect how he picks up large objects and uses them as "clubs" to hit people in HTH Combat, instead of the Weapon Size/Shape rules (see below). In this case, the character has to Spread for area, not OCV, and the number of hexes Spread must equal the "footprint" of the object.

Example: *Grond decides to smash the Champions with a school bus. In game terms, a bus measures 5" x 2.5" (see* The Ultimate Vehicle, *page 48). Therefore Grond must Spread for 10 hexes — a footprint 5 hexes long and 2 hexes wide (the GM lets him have the additional .5 hex of width for free). Therefore he loses 10 Damage Classes from his attack and only does (90-50) 40 STR worth of damage — 8d6. On the other hand, he's hit all five of the Champions at once!*

Surprised

This Combat Modifier applies when a character is attacked from behind, above, by an invisible attacker, from ambush, or any other situation where he's surprised by the attack.

A character Surprised while out of combat is at ½ DCV and takes 2x STUN from the attack; moreover, the penalty for any Placed Shot is halved (see page 120). Double the STUN damage before applying defenses (and, in campaigns using the Hit Locations rules, before applying the STUN modifier for a location).

A character Surprised while in combat is at ½ DCV, but Placed Shot penalties are not halved, and he takes regular STUN damage from attacks.

For an attacker to receive a Surprised bonus, the target must not be expecting any attacks. For example, a character running at Noncombat velocity toward a fight expects trouble, and isn't totally unaware, so he usually can't be Surprised. In this situation he wouldn't take 2x STUN (but he would have a DCV penalty because he's using Noncombat Movement). Conversely, an unconscious (Knocked Out) or asleep character takes 2x STUN.

The GM should interpret the phrase "expecting any attacks" in a common-sense fashion. Obviously, anyone who's in combat expects to be attacked, so in most cases other attackers entering the fray (even by surprise, as with unexpected reinforcements arriving) won't inflict the Surprised penalty. However, it's possible for a character in combat to be attacked from so unexpected a quarter, or in so unexpected a way, that he suffers a Surprised penalty. Some possible examples include:

—a clever assassin uses Stealth to sneak up behind the character and stab him in the back

—a character who seems like an ordinary soldier suddenly reveals that he has superhuman powers

—a heretofore unrevealed sniper fires at the character

On the other hand, if the character has good reason to suspect the presence of a sneaky attacker, a sniper, or the like, Surprised probably wouldn't apply. And if the character has Defense Maneuver, whether he's expecting surprise attacks really doesn't matter; he's automatically prepared for them.

Surprise Move

A Surprise Move is any maneuver a character makes that startles an opponent, tricks an enemy, takes advantage of a foe's unperceptiveness, or involves an unexpected action that provides him with a new angle of attack. Examples might include faking unconsciousness and attacking when an enemy comes close, swinging from a chandelier to attack an enemy from above, or suddenly shifting from one type of attack to another.

The GM should reward this sort of inventiveness on the part of the players with a bonus,

because this type of creative playing adds depth, interest, and excitement to the game. (Of course, the villains also get their chance to pull Surprise Moves on the characters.) The bonus for a Surprise Move is +1, +2, or +3 OCV (sometimes even greater), depending upon the maneuver attempted and the circumstances.

Target A Hex

A character may make an area-affecting attack (such as with Darkness or a power with the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantage) against either a hex or the target's normal DCV. Generally, it's easier to hit the hex the target's standing in, because the DCV of a hex is 3, or 0 if the hex is adjacent. Attacks aimed at a hex suffer the normal Range Modifier.

Target Prone

A prone target (*i.e.,* one who's lying on the ground) is at half DCV. However, he may have Concealment, making it harder to hit him. Many attacks and other situations can cause a character to become prone.

If a character wants to drop prone voluntarily (perhaps to get behind Concealment quickly, avoid being run over by a train, or the like), he must use a Zero Phase Action (this is a defensive Action he can Abort to). Getting back to one's feet takes a Half Phase Action (unless the character uses Breakfall; see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 51). Neither dropping down nor standing up costs END, but it does affect the character's CV — see *Groundfighting,* page 139, for details.

Target Size

Targets larger or smaller than normal human size (1" tall) are easier or harder to hit. Big objects are easier to hit: a target 2x human size is +2 to an attacker's OCV; a target 4x human size is +4; and so on. Targets smaller than human size are harder to hit: ½ human Size is -2 to an attacker's OCV; ¼ human size is -4; and so forth. (A human-sized or hex-sized inanimate object typically has a DCV of 3; the GM can treat the OCV bonus for large objects as a DCV penalty, and the OCV penalty for small objects as a DCV bonus, if he prefers.)

The Target Size modifier is generally only used for objects that don't have defined DCVs. Characters with Size Powers, or who are larger or smaller than normal all the time, have CV modifiers defined by those powers, their other abilities, and their Disadvantages. Similarly, Vehicles have their own DCV modifiers based on size.

These same modifiers apply to PER Rolls made to perceive an object that's larger or smaller than normal human size.

Throw Object

Some objects are more difficult to throw than others because of their shape. This imposes a penalty on the Attack Roll in addition to the standard Range Modifier. The penalties described here only apply to Ranged attacks; see *Weapon Size/Shape,* below, for information concerning HTH Combat with large weapons or objects. This Combat Modifier is for non-weapon objects; it doesn't apply to weapons like throwing knives, which are meant for throwing.

Throwing an unbalanced, unaerodynamic object, such as an unwilling character, a sword, or a car imposes an additional -4 Range Modifier. Throwing a balanced or aerodynamic object, such as a willing character, a rock, or a jetpack, imposes an additional -2 Range Modifier. Characters can throw balanced and aerodynamic objects, such as a pole thrown like a spear, without any additional Range Modifier.

If a character throws something that fills one hex or more, treat it like an Area Of Effect Attack (*i.e.,* allow him to target the attack at a hex, rather than at a specific target). You should also use this method for thrown explosives, such as grenades, and similar attacks not targeted at an individual.

Alternately, the GM can determine the OCV bonus for targeting the object being thrown (see *Target Size,* above) and apply that bonus to the attacker's OCV when he throws the object. This reduces the chance that characters with high STR can repeatedly use large missiles to hit other characters effortlessly.

The Throwing Table, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 35, describes how far a character can throw different types of objects.

A character does his STR damage with a thrown object, up to the DEF+BODY of the object. For example, a costumed vigilante with STR 20 who throws a coffee mug (DEF 1, BODY 1) at someone only does 2d6 of damage — even though he can do 4d6 STR damage with a blow, the object's DEF+BODY equals two, which limits him to 2d6.

CATCHING THROWN OBJECTS

Sometimes characters may want to catch objects thrown to them. Typically this requires at least a Zero Phase Action, if not more (unless the GM rules otherwise). In the interest of dramatic sense, the GM could let a character catch something when he doesn't have a Phase, but then require him to spend a Half Phase Action (or the like) on his next Phase to "ready" the object.

These rules only apply to objects thrown to the character with the intent that he catch them. Characters cannot catch thrown weapons and other attacks; that would require an appropriately-constructed ability built using Missile Deflection or the like.

Unfamiliar Weapon

This optional rule is usually only used in Heroic campaigns. A character must have Weapon Familiarity with a weapon to use it properly. Otherwise, he suffers a -3 OCV penalty when using the unfamiliar weapon.

Weapon Size/Shape

Most weapons described in the *HERO System* rules are normal ones like swords and clubs. However, characters sometimes pick up some mighty strange objects and use them to beat on other characters — a giant might pick up a log and wield it as a club against a group of knights, the super-strong Grond might pick up the armored hero Defender and use him to smash some other superhero into a bloody pulp.

In this situation, the GM has two choices. First, for really large objects, he can treat them as Area Of Effect attacks that cover an area equal to the size of the object. Thus, a supervillain who uses a car as a club would cover a 2"x1" area (the size of a standard car) when he tries to smash the heroes with it. To take a more complicated example, the giant described above could swing his "club" from side to side; this would cover an area defined by the length of the log and the arc through which the giant swings it. Unlike normal Area Of Effect attacks, targets often can Dodge this sort of attack. For example, the knights could simply duck under (or jump over) the log as the giant swings it, or the heroes step out of the way of the car as the supervillain brings it crashing down. (Of course, targets can also Dive For Cover if they prefer.)

Second, the GM can determine the OCV bonus for targeting the impromptu weapon (see *Target Size,* above) and apply that bonus to the attacker's OCV when he attacks with the object. Thus, using a human as a club would provide no OCV bonus, but using a log that's four times human size would add +4 to the attacker's OCV.

Unlike normal weapons, which are built to hit other things without suffering significant damage themselves, impromptu weapons typically take some or all of the damage they inflict. That's why strong characters like to pick up Enemy A and use him to hit Enemy B — both enemies take the damage. The GM decides the extent to which an impromptu weapon is damaged through use. It should depend on how much like a "normal" weapon the object is (a log used as a club wouldn't suffer much damage, but a goblin used for the same purpose would likely take just as much damage as the target).

An impromptu weapon can only do as many Damage Classes of damage as it has DEF+BODY; if the character using the weapon does more damage with his STR than that, the object typically breaks. See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 447 for further information.

WEAPON LENGTHS

Weapons are defined with four Length categories: Small (S), Medium (M), Long (L) and Extra Long (L2). Short weapons include things like daggers and hatchets, most natural weaponry like claws and fangs, and unarmed attacks. Long and Extra Long weapons include shafted weapons like spears, polearms, and lances, and perhaps the natural weapons of creatures with exceptionally long limbs. Everything else is a Medium weapon. The following optional rules apply to the use of weapons of various lengths; GMs may choose to use some, all, or none of them. See also pages 46-47 regarding weapons in cramped or enclosed spaces.

Weapon Reach

A Short or Medium weapon can strike targets in the character's own hex, or in adjacent hexes. As always, the GM should apply some common sense when adjudicating a combat situation. If a character stands on one side of a hex, and there's a target on the far side of the hex across from him, he can't stab that character with a dagger or sword — that's not really "adjacent" in any meaningful sense. A character's "reach" may include taking a step or two, but not so many that it would amount to a Half Move.

Long weapons have ranges of 1" or 2". A weapon with a 1" range can strike characters anywhere in an adjacent hex, and possibly even slightly into a hex beyond that depending on the relative positions of attacker and target. A weapon with a 2" range can strike characters anywhere in any adjacent hex or the hexes beyond that, and possibly even into a hex beyond that depending on the relative positions of attacker and target.

If you're not using a hex map, you can simplify matters by assigning specific lengths to the weapons. A character with a Short weapon can strike anyone within reach of his arm (about two to two-and-a-half feet from his body). A character with a Medium weapon can strike anyone within six feet of his body. A character with a Long weapon can strike anyone within 12 feet of his body; one with an Extra Long weapon can strike any target within 18 feet of his body.

An attacker with a Long or Extra Long weapon can attack "over" a friendly character, at an opponent on the other side, at a -2 OCV penalty. This makes massed ranks of spearmen particularly effective in battle.

OCV Penalties

Wielders of Short weapons are at a disadvantage when fighting opponents with longer weapons. When a character with a Short weapon (including unarmed characters) fights a target with a Medium weapon, he suffers a -1 OCV penalty. When he fights a target with a Long or Extra Long weapon, he's at -2 OCV.

Similarly, when a character with a Medium weapon fights a target with a Long or Extra Long weapon, he suffers a -1 OCV penalty. A character with a Long weapon suffers no OCV penalty against a character with an Extra Long weapon. In

any situation, the character with the longer weapon does *not* get a bonus to OCV.

Weapon length OCV penalties apply to attempts to Block as well as attacks.

A weapon length OCV penalty only lasts as long as it takes the character with the shorter weapon to hit the target with the longer weapon. Hitting the target means he's gotten inside the target's reach — and the situation reverses. The wielder of the longer weapon now suffers an OCV penalty identical to the penalty the character previously had. To get rid of the penalty, he has to back up 1" to get his reach back (this constitutes a Half Move, of course), or has to hit his foe in spite of the OCV penalty (this means he's thrown his foe back to his preferred fighting range).

When a character has a weapon the same length as his foe's (for example, if both have polearm Long weapons), but decides to make an unarmed attack (for instance, kicking his opponent), he does not suffer the OCV penalty — because he has a weapon of length similar to his foe's, he fights at no reach disadvantage even though he's using a Short attack.

Shields And Longer Weapons

A shield constitutes a Short weapon when used to attack a target (*i.e.,* make a shield-bash attack), and suffers any penalties appropriate for weapon length. However, the shield does not suffer a weapon length OCV penalty when its bearer tries to Block a Medium, Long, or Extra Long weapon attack. A shield blocks a dagger, a sword, a spear, and a pike with the same OCV.

Hit Locations

A character with a Short weapon can choose to roll 2d6+1 (High Shot) or 2d6+7 (Low Shot) (depending on whether he strikes high or low) for his Hit Location rolls without taking any OCV penalty for making a Placed Shot.

A character with a Medium, Long, or Extra Long weapon rolls the standard 3d6 for his Hit Location rolls. If he wants to make a High Shot, Low Shot, or the like, he suffers the standard OCV penalty for a Placed Shot.

WEAPONS FOR SMALL AND TALL CHARACTERS

In some campaigns, characters come in many different sizes. For example, the characters in a Fantasy campaign might range from sprites and halflings to trolls and giants. Each race uses weapons suitable to its size, which may affect the damage a weapon does. The weapons tables in this chapter assume weapons sized for humans and other characters that are standard height (1") (or close to it, such as dwarves). The accompanying table provides guidelines for varying the damage and STR Minima for smaller and larger weapons, based on the Size/Weight categories used for Physical Limitations and Package Deals (see the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 574).

Characters sometimes want to wield weapons that are too large or small for them. Even assuming a character has enough STR to lift the weapon at all, he may be unable to wield it effectively due to its STR Minimum (see page 327 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*). Additionally, the character may suffer an OCV penalty because he cannot handle the weapon effectively. Find the character's Size/Weight category on the Larger And Smaller Weapons table. A character can wield weapons used by creatures one category smaller or larger than he at no penalty. For each step beyond that, he suffers a -1 OCV penalty (this is cumulative with any STR Minimum penalties). For example, a human can wield a Large or Small creature's weapon with no penalty. But he suffers a -1 OCV when using Diminutive or Enormous weapons, a -2 OCV for Tiny or Huge weapons, and so forth. A Huge giant can wield Enormous and Gigantic weapons without any size problems, but would suffer a -3 OCV with a Small creature's weapon.

LARGER AND SMALLER WEAPONS

Size Category	Weapon Damage	Weapon STR MIN
Insectile	-6 DC	-30
Minute	-5 DC	-25
Minuscule	-4 DC	-20
Tiny	-3 DC	-15
Diminutive	-2 DC	-10
Small	-1 DC	-5
Human-sized	—	—
Large	+1 DC	+10
Enormous	+2 DC	+20
Huge	+3 DC	+30
Gigantic	+4 DC	+40
Gargantuan	+5 DC	+50
Colossal	+6 DC	+60

Every step below Human-sized reduces a weapon's Length category by one (to a minimum of "Short"). Thus, a spear that's Long at human dimensions counts as a Short weapon when created for Diminutive and smaller creatures. Similarly, each step above Human-sized tends to add one to the weapon's Length category (to a maximum of "L2"), though the GM may make exceptions to this if appropriate.

If appropriate, a GM may let two or more characters wield a weapon too large for either of them to use on his own. To determine the group's effective STR, add their lifting capacities together, then use that total to derive the group's "STR" on the Strength Table. That tells you whether the group can lift the weapon, and how the group's STR compares to the weapon's STR Minimum. All characters wielding the weapon must take their Phases on the same Segments (faster characters have to Hold their Actions if necessary, and may lose some Actions). They must use the same DEX to strike. This DEX determines the group's OCV; the group cannot apply any Combat Skill Levels (unless every member of the group has CSLs with Oversized Weapons, in which case they can apply only as many Levels as the character with the fewest Levels has).

See also page 58 regarding Blocking with different-sized weapons.

NINE WAYS TO SPEED UP COMBAT

The slow pace at which combat sometimes proceeds is a complaint common to many role-playing games. Here are a few suggestions for making your *HERO System* combats run swiftly and smoothly.

1. Restrict SPDs: The more Actions the participants can take, the longer combats last. Limiting characters to relatively low SPDs (such as a maximum of 4 or 5) can help to speed combats up some.

2. Abolish The Speed Chart: Another approach is to abandon the Speed Chart altogether and allow each character to take, for example, three Actions per Turn (or "one action per round," with each round defined as being, say, four seconds long). This may require the GM to create some "house rules" to handle Holding an Action, speedster characters, and the like.

3. Be Prepared: The GM should come to the game with a chart for his use listing the DEXs, SPDs, and other relevant combat information for the PCs and their enemies. This allows him to read off the order of combat quickly. Sometimes putting this chart up for everyone to see (by writing it on a chalkboard, for example) helps to keep the players focused on the game (albeit at the expense of letting them see the NPCs' combat information).

4. Let Players Roll In Advance: If you trust your players, let them make their Attack Rolls and other rolls before you call their DEX in a Phase. That way, instead of having to wait for Fred to roll to hit, then roll damage, then count the damage, you can just have him tell you, "I missed" or "I hit DCV 8 for 38 STUN, 7 BODY." You could even have each player make twenty or thirty Attack Rolls and damage rolls in advance and write them down on a piece of paper for you. For each one of their attacks, you cross the next entry off the list and describe what happens.

5. Require VPP Preparation: If any PC has a Variable Power Pool, only let him use powers he's prepared in advance — don't let him stop in mid-game to create a new gadget, spell, or ability he hasn't already written up.

6. Use Average Damage: To save time rolling and counting damage, assume all attacks do average damage. If that becomes too predictable, roll 1d6 for damage — on a 1-2, the attack does 25% less damage, on a 5-6 33% more damage. Or, for every point by which a character makes his Attack Roll, increase the average damage of his attack by 10%.

7. Ignore STUN Damage: For some genres, such as Fantasy, you can ignore STUN damage from ordinary attacks without negatively affecting the game. If an attacker wants to Stun (instead of kill) his target, or uses an attack that only does STUN, keep track of STUN damage, but otherwise don't bother. This also saves the characters from having to engage in the highly unheroic act of administering a *coup de grace* to every unconscious opponent when the fight ends.

8. Don't Let NPCs Take Recoveries: For all but the most powerful or important enemies and NPCs, don't apply Recoveries (even the Post-Segment 12 Recovery). Once they go down, they stay down.

9. Treat Minor NPCs Differently: When the characters are facing "thugs" or other low-powered, low-quality enemies, don't calculate every point of damage precisely. One good, solid hit (perhaps any attack, or an attack succeeding by 3 or more on the Attack Roll) takes any thug out of the combat.

chapter three:

COMBAT AND MARTIAL MANEUVERS

COMBAT MANEUVERS

Hand-To-Hand Combat (HTH): Combat between characters standing in the same or adjacent hexes, and usually involving punching or melee weapons such as swords, not attacks that work at Range (such as guns or Energy Blasts).

Ranged Combat: Combat that takes place at any distance beyond HTH Combat range, involving the use of Ranged attacks such as missile weapons (hand-held weapons used at a distance, such as arrows or thrown daggers), small arms (pistols, rifles, lasers guns, and the like), energy bolts, and so forth.

Although the number of different ways one character can strike another in combat is nearly infinite, the differences between the vast majority of these maneuvers — *in game terms* — are minimal. Therefore, the *HERO System* has a limited number of *Combat Maneuvers* that cover most of the possibilities. Any character can use these basic Combat Maneuvers, provided he has the necessary weapon (if any) or meets other special conditions listed.

There are three types of Combat Maneuvers. The first type, *Standard Combat Maneuvers,* can be used by any character in just about any type of campaign. They cover the vast majority of combat situations, and many characters never need to use any other maneuvers. The second type, *Optional Combat Maneuvers,* tend to be more advanced or complicated, or are primarily suited to particular types of campaigns. As their name indicates, they're optional; not all GMs use them in all campaigns.

The first two types of Combat Maneuvers are free — they cost no Character Points, and any character can use them. The third type, *Martial Maneuvers,* costs Character Points to learn (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 64). Martial Arts are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Combat Maneuvers can modify the character's OCV, DCV, damage done, and/or other factors. Any modifiers from a Maneuver remain in effect from when the character performs the Maneuver until the beginning of his next Phase. Thus, a SPD 3 character who Dodges on his Phase in Segment 4 retains the Maneuver's +3 DCV bonus until the beginning of his next Phase in Segment 8.

Some Combat Maneuvers provide a DCV bonus or penalty. For Dodge and Martial Dodge, the bonus applies to all attacks; for other Maneuvers, the modifier generally only applies to HTH Combat. However, for ease of game play, some GMs allow a Maneuver's DCV modifier to apply to DCV generally (*i.e.,* against all attacks, HTH or Ranged).

A character can use any of the Combat Maneuvers, provided he meets the conditions and restrictions listed on the Combat Maneuvers Table and his GM allows the maneuver. The player must state what Combat Maneuver his character uses before rolling the dice. Unless the rules note otherwise, using a Combat Maneuver counts as an Attack Action (see page 18). Using a Combat Maneuver typically costs 1 END (see page 143), and the character also has to pay the END cost for any STR or power used with the Maneuver.

Characters are not limited to using the maneuvers described here — they're free to try any action they want, even if it's not listed on the Combat Maneuvers Table. The GM should determine the modifiers applicable to and effects of a maneuver by comparing it to the listed Combat Maneuvers. If the action is sufficiently odd, the GM should give the character a Surprise Move bonus. Usually actions players suggest consist of several parts, and may take their characters more than one Phase to accomplish.

Example: *Andarra says: "I'll pull out my pistol, shoot the guard, smash the window, and leap outside!" The GM analyzes this action, and decides it consists of: a Half Phase Action (draw weapon), a Half Phase Action (shoot the guard, which is a Strike), a Zero Phase Action (smashing the window, a use of Casual STR), and a Half Phase Action (leap out of the window). It takes Andarra one full Phase and a Half Phase to do what she's described. That leaves her a Half Phase to move away from the window, shoot other guards, or do something else.*

ROLEPLAYING COMBAT MANEUVERS

The rules explain how combat in the *HERO System* works in game terms. But no system, however complex, can include every possible combination of punch, kick, energy bolt, sword, and gun. The Combat Maneuvers' names describe the general form of a particular type of attack. But the names of the Maneuvers shouldn't dictate how a character actually performs the attack.

Each of the Combat Maneuvers and Martial Maneuvers actually encompasses dozens of different types of attacks — in essence it labels them with a generic name and allows you to apply some game rules to them. For example, you won't find "Snap Kick" or "Elbow Smash" listed in the Combat Maneuvers Table. Those are simply forms of Strike. A character may use a Snap Kick against a fallen foe, or an Elbow Smash when infighting, but the *HERO System* simulates all of these with the OCV, DCV, and effects of a Strike. A Haymaker can be a double-handed smash, a kick, or a full uppercut. A Martial Throw can be as simple as a foot thrust in the way of a running opponent.

The martial arts styles listed below are a good example of this. Although constructed from the same group of Martial Maneuvers, each one applies its own name and effects to the various Maneuvers. Thus, a Nerve Strike is a Low Blow in Dirty Infighting and a *Tien-hsueh* Strike in Kung Fu. The rules applicable to each Maneuver are the same, but they have different names and special effects in each style.

COMBAT MANEUVERS TABLE

STANDARD MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Phase	OCV	DCV	Effects
Block	½	+0	+0	Block HTH attacks, Abort
Brace	0	+2	½	+2 OCV only to offset the Range Modifier
Disarm	½	-2	+0	Disarm target, requires STR vs. STR Roll
Dodge	½	—	+3	Dodge all attacks, Abort
Grab	½	-1	-2	Grab Two Limbs; can squeeze or throw
Grab By	½ †	-3	-4	Move and Grab object, +(v/5) to STR
Haymaker	½*	+0	-5	+4 Damage Classes to any attack
Move By	½ †	-2	-2	((STR/2) + (v/5))d6; attacker takes ⅓ damage
Move Through	½ †	-v/5	-3	(STR + (v/3))d6; attacker takes ½ or full damage
Set	1	+1	+0	
Strike	½	+0	+0	STR damage or by weapon type
Other Attacks	½	+0	+0	

OPTIONAL MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Phase	OCV	DCV	Effects
Blazing Away	½	+0	+0	Make as many attacks as desired, only hit on a 3
Club Weapon	½	+0	+0	Killing weapon does equivalent Normal Damage
Cover	½	-2	+0	Target held at "gunpoint"
Dive For Cover	½	+0	+0	Character avoids attack; Abort
Hipshot	½	-1	+0	+1 DEX only for purposes of initiative
Hurry	½	-2	-2	+1d6 DEX only for purposes of initiative
Pulling A Punch	½	-1/5d6	+0	Strike, normal STUN damage, ½ BODY damage
Rapid Fire	1	-2/x	x½	Make multiple Ranged attacks
Roll With A Punch	½	-2	-2	"Block" after being hit, take ½ damage; Abort
Snap Shot	1	-1	+0	Lets character duck back behind cover
Suppression Fire	½	-2	+0	Continuous fire on hex(es), must be Autofire
Sweep	1	-2/x	x½	Make multiple HTH attacks

* This maneuver takes one extra Segment to perform
†: Grab By, Move By, and Move Through are usually performed at the end of a Full Move, and thus take a Full Phase. However, a character could perform one after taking a Half Phase Action (such as opening a door), so they're listed as Half Phase Actions.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS:

Phase: How long it takes to perform the Maneuver (usually either a Half Phase [½] or a Full Phase [1]).

OCV (Offensive Combat Value): The Maneuver's modification to OCV. For example, a +1 OCV means a character has +1 to his OCV when making an Attack Roll with the Maneuver.

DCV (Defensive Combat Value): The maneuver's modification to the attacker's DCV. For example, performing a Haymaker decreases the attacker's DCV, making it more likely he'll be hit.

Effects: The damage or other effect done by the Maneuver. STR means the Maneuver does STR/5 in d6 of Normal Damage.

Abort: A character can forfeit his next Phase to perform this Maneuver in a Segment when he doesn't have a Phase. For a more detailed explanation, see *Aborting An Action,* page 361.

Dash ("—"): That column is not relevant to that maneuver.

VISUALIZING BLOCK

Don't forget the visual element of the combat you're describing. A Block is a Block, but visually it can be any number of things. A character can Block a punch or weapon by catching the incoming blow on his own wrist or forearm; he can Block a kick by using the forearm or a counterkick; he can Block a sword attack by clapping the incoming blade between his two hands (a popular technique in martial arts movies).

Players should strive to come up with creative attacks and actions in combat and then find the Maneuver that best represents the actions they envision. Truly unusual moves should earn a Surprise Move bonus, but GMs must be careful not to give out bonuses unless a move really deserves it. The listed Maneuvers assume that both the attacker and defender are fighting intelligently. Only very surprising, risky, or exciting actions should get additional bonuses.

STANDARD COMBAT MANEUVERS

Here are the rules for the Standard Combat Maneuvers. A few, particularly Block and Grab, have information that pertains to related Martial Maneuvers as well.

Most of the Combat Maneuvers are fairly simple and straightforward at their core, with increased complexity you can add on as you learn the rules and/or begin to deal with complex situations in the game and want more detailed rules. If necessary, check with your GM to find out what level of detail he considers appropriate.

BLOCK

This Combat Maneuver allows a character to block an opponent's HTH attack and set himself up to deliver the next blow.

Using Block

A character who wants to Block must declare his intention before his attacker makes an Attack Roll. To attempt a Block, he must make an Attack Roll against his opponent's OCV (not DCV). If he succeeds, he Blocks the attack and takes no damage (and no Knockdown or Knockback). Furthermore, if these two characters both have their next Phases in the same Segment, the character who Blocked automatically gets to act first, regardless of relative DEX (the Blocking character's opponent is delayed until after the Blocking character's DEX; see below). Blocks have no effect on Ranged attacks. Using Block counts as an Attack Action.

If the Block misses, the attacker still has to hit the Blocking character's DCV. The CV bonuses obtained from Block are general ones; they apply against all characters, not just against the attacker the character attempts to Block.

Example: *Ogre tries to punch Powerhouse. Powerhouse attempts to Block. Ogre's OCV is 6, and Powerhouse's OCV is 5. Powerhouse needs a 5 + 11 - 6 = 10 or less. Powerhouse rolls a 10 and successfully Blocks. Powerhouse takes no damage. If he and Ogre both have their next Phases in the same Segment, Powerhouse automatically gets to act first, even though Ogre's DEX is higher than his.*

A character can normally Block any HTH Combat attack, including Disarms, Choke Holds, Grabs/Grab Bys, Move Bys/Throughs, sword blows (see below), most No Range attacks (unless the GM rules otherwise), and so forth (but not including HTH Combat attack bought with the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantages, or the like). However, the GM must consider common sense, dramatic sense, and game balance when determining what attacks a character can Block. For example, although a character could Block a Move Through performed against him by another character, he probably can't Block a Move Through performed by a Vehicle.

If a character Blocks a Constant HTH attack, the first roll deflects it entirely — it's as if the attacker missed. He doesn't have to keep Blocking it in subsequent Segments.

If a character Blocks a Move Through, the character making the unsuccessful Move Through attack does not take any damage.

Generally, a character cannot Block a HTH Combat attack bought with the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantages. However, the GM can allow a character to Block such attacks in appropriate circumstances. For example, if both the attacker and the defender had Area Of Effect on their STR, bought to represent the enormous size of their hands, the GM might allow each character to Block the other's attacks.

Weapons, Shields, And Strength

In Heroic campaigns, the GM can assign a penalty (-1 to -3) to Block if one character is using a melee weapon and the other is not.

A character using a shield to Block may add the shield's DCV bonus to his OCV for purposes of Blocking.

A character with WF: Off Hand who fights with a weapon in each hand receives +1 DCV. When Blocking, he may add this bonus to his OCV to determine if the Block succeeds. At the GM's option, any character, regardless of whether he buys WF: Off Hand, may add +1 to attempts to Block when wielding a weapon in his off hand. (In effect, this makes any weapon the equivalent of a small shield.) If the GM establishes such a rule, characters who buy WF: Off Hand should receive +2 DCV (and bonus to Block) instead of +1.

Block does not depend on the relative STRs of the characters involved, or on the weapons used. Therefore, a pixy with a dagger can Block a giant wielding a club — the special effect of the Block could be gently deflecting the blow *just enough* to keep from being hit, or even of a sort of dodging. If the GM wants to, he can adapt the -2 modifier for unarmed Blocks of weapon attacks (see above) to this sort of situation. The weapon breakage rules on page 189 of *Fantasy Hero* also apply.

Block And Invisible Attacks

Generally, a character cannot Block an attack he cannot perceive (or, at best, can only Block with OCV 0). That means the GM has to decide on a case-by-case basis whether a character can "perceive" an attack. If the attack is Fully Invisible (including the source of the power), then a charac-

ter probably has no chance to Block it. On the other hand, if the character can't perceive the attack but can perceive his attacker gesturing at him or initiating the attack, the GM might simply apply the penalties for fighting an invisible attacker, or maybe a Surprised modifier, to the Block attempt.

ACTING FIRST

As noted above, a character who Blocks an attacker automatically gets to act first (regardless of relative DEX) if he and the attacker have their next Phases in the same Segment. If this benefit applies, it does so even if the attacker decides not to attack the character in his next Phase. However, the attacker's DEX for purposes of acting first is not lowered as to any other character. Unless the character stops the attacker somehow, the attacker can attack some other target at his normal DEX.

The "may act first" benefit only applies if the two characters involved both have their normal Phases on the next Segment. If the attacker Holds his Action and chooses to act in a Segment in which the character has a Phase but the attacker normally does not, the characters' respective Actions occur in their normal order — whichever character has the higher DEX acts first, despite the Block.

BLOCKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE

A character can Block for someone else — a useful tactic when a character wants to defend an injured or defenseless person from an attacker. To do this, a character must be in range of either the attacker or the target. In other words, he must either be in the same hex or an adjacent hex, or have a weapon or some other way to extend his reach. If the weapon is Short or Medium, he must be in the same hex or an adjacent hex to either the attacker or the target; if the weapon has a reach of 1" or more, he must be within that reach of either of them.

Regardless of the weapon used, an attempt to Block for someone else is made at -2 OCV. If it succeeds, the attack is Blocked. However, the character does not automatically get to go first before the opponent whose attack he Blocked if they both have their next Phase in the same Segment; they act on their respective DEXs in the usual manner.

Multiple Blocks

A character who has successfully Blocked one attack can Block additional attacks made against him (by the same or different characters). He may make these additional attempts to Block in the same Phase or later Segments before his next Phase (this does not count as Aborting to Block; it's just an extension of the initial Block). Each additional roll is made at a cumulative -2 penalty (second Block -2, third Block -4, and so on). If the character misses any of his Blocks, he cannot Block further attacks. If he attempts to Block an attack in a Segment in which he does not have a Phase, he cannot Abort in that Segment.

Example: *Ogre, frustrated, brings a group of friends to pound on Powerhouse. Powerhouse blocks Ogre's punch as before, but now must Block another attack in this Phase (in Segment 4), one in Segment 5, and two more in Segment 6. His roll to Block this second attack is determined as described above, but with an additional -2 penalty to Powerhouse's OCV. He makes this roll, but fails against the third attack (he had a -4 penalty, after all). Because he's failed to Block an attack, Powerhouse cannot try to Block any more attacks in Segment 5. Furthermore, he cannot Abort to a defensive Action in Segment 5, because he tried to Block.*

If a character Aborts to Block, and then continues to Block other attacks in later Segments after he Aborted, he may continue to Block in the Segment in which his next Phase occurs, but before his Phase occurs. For example, if a SPD 3, DEX 15 character Aborts his Phase in Segment 12 to successfully Block an attack, he can Block a second attack (at -2) in Segment 4 — when his next usable Phase occurs on DEX 15 — if his attacker has a Phase in Segment 4 prior to DEX 15. Furthermore, he then receives his normal Phase when his DEX occurs in the initiative order, and may make an attack or perform any other Action he normally could during a Phase. However, the GM may, in his discretion, change these rules, and/or impose an OCV penalty (or other appropriate penalty) on the Action the character takes when his Phase arises.

If a character successfully Blocks attacks from multiple opponents, he gets the "may act first in the next Phase, if they share it" benefit against all of them.

There's no absolute limit to the number of Blocks a character can perform — though the penalty for multiple Blocks imposes a practical limit.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

Some attacks, such as Sweep or Multiple Move By, involve a sequence of attacks directed at the target in which if one of the attacks misses, all subsequent attacks automatically miss. For these purposes, successfully Blocking one of the attacks in the sequence does not count as a "miss"; the attacker may continue with the rest of the sequence.

Sometimes a character wants to Block an Autofire HTH Combat attack that has "hit" him multiple times. Autofire used against a single target requires a single Attack Roll from which the number of hits are determined. Therefore, the character makes a single Block roll. If he makes the roll exactly, he Blocks one of the hits. For every 2 points by which he makes the roll beyond that, he Blocks another hit. If the character Blocking the attack gets attacked by another character that same Phase and wants to Block that character's attacks, his Block roll suffers a -2 for the second attack, -4 for the third, and so forth. The penalty doesn't derive from the number of Autofire shots Blocked, because the character only made one Block roll, and Blocking some but less than all of an attacker's Autofire shots does not count as a "missed Block" for purposes of ending a character's ability to make multiple Blocks.

For an attack like Sweep, which involves multiple Attack Rolls, a character must make one Block roll for each Attack Roll, at the normal penalty for making multiple Blocks in the same Phase. So, to Block a three-attack Sweep involves one normal Block roll, a second roll at -2, and a third at -4. If another character attacked the Blocking character, an attempt to Block his attack would be at -6.

BLOCKING AND MISSILE DEFLECTION

In many campaigns, particularly martial arts games, Blocks can aid Missile Deflection in some ways.

—If the GM permits, a character can use his Martial Block (or other Block-based maneuver) with his Missile Deflection instead of his normal Block, thereby gaining the Martial Block's CV bonuses with his Missile Deflection.

—If a character has Missile Reflection defined as catching a weapon and immediately throwing it back, he can instead just catch the weapon. He may then use it himself or throw it on a later Phase. Throwing it on a later Phase constitutes an Attack Action, not as a continuation of his Missile Reflection.

—A weapon that has a large striking surface (like a war fan or a shield) can add its OCV (or, in the case of shields, DCV) bonus to the Missile Deflection Block attempt.

BLOCKS COMBINED WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

Some Martial Maneuvers, such as Defensive Throw and Grappling Block, combine Block with other Martial Maneuver elements such as Grab or Throw. Since these maneuvers have an offensive or aggressive aspect to them, a character cannot Abort to them (even if he wants to use just the Block part of the maneuver).

REDEFINING BLOCK

The basic Block maneuver allows the character to avoid all damage from a Hand-To-Hand attack and then go first in the next Phase if both combatants have their next Phase in common. If the GM prefers, he can redefine Block slightly to allow different combat dynamics. The following are some suggestions along these lines:

1) A Block deflects all damage from an attack, but does not let the Blocker go first in the next Phase. This sort of Block is sometimes referred to as an "active Dodge."

2) A Block deflects half of the damage from an attack, and allows the Blocker to go first in the next Phase.

3) A Block deflects half of the damage from an attack, and does not allow the Blocker to go first in the next Phase.

4) A Block deflects all of the damage from one attack only, and provides its DCV bonus against all other attacks that Phase. In other words, characters cannot use Block to avoid successive attacks in the same Phase, though they get the DCV bonus from the maneuver.

BRACE

This Maneuver allows a character to brace himself to steady his aim and improve his accuracy at range.

To Brace, a character must take a Zero Phase Action (not an Attack Action) to steady himself — in effect, it "tacks on" to another Combat Maneuver, allowing a character to Brace and then make an Attack Action all in the same Phase. This gives him a +2 OCV that only offsets the Range Modifier. Additionally, Bracing reduces the STR Minimum for using a Ranged weapon by 5. However, the character's DCV is halved because he stands still to Brace. If a character is Stunned while Bracing, he loses the effects of the Maneuver.

A character can combine Brace with Set in the same Phase and get both bonuses. He gains a +1 OCV, plus a +2 OCV only to offset the Range Modifier — but this takes a Full Phase, and he's at ½ DCV. For more information, see *Set*.

If a character is Bracing and/or Setting, and he's Stunned by an attack, he loses the effects of either maneuver (or both, if using both).

DISARM

This Maneuver allows a character to knock a weapon or hand-held object out of another character's grasp.

USING DISARM

To use Disarm, the character makes an Attack Roll. If the Attack Roll succeeds, the two characters engage in a STR Versus STR Contest: each rolls 1d6 per 5 points of STR and counts the Normal Damage BODY. If the attacker's BODY total is higher or the rolls tie, the Disarm succeeds and the target's weapon or object goes flying ½d6 hexes in the direction of the strike (attacker's choice, within reason). If the defender's BODY total is higher, he retains his grip on his weapon — the Disarm fails.

Modifying The Disarm Roll

In some situations the GM may wish to modify the Disarm roll. First, there may be a negative modifier (-1 to -3) if the character attempting the Disarm is unarmed or using a short weapon to try to Disarm an armed character or one with a much longer weapon — it's hard for a bare-handed fighter to Disarm someone with a sword! Second, if the target of the Disarm is Surprised, he may only use his Casual STR to resist the Disarm. Third, it's a little more difficult to Disarm a two-handed weapon than a weapon held in one hand. A character trying this suffers a -2 OCV penalty on his Disarm. Alternately or in addition, the target gets +5 STR in the STR Versus STR Contest to keep hold of his weapon.

Fourth, characters with Martial Maneuvers that involve Disarming opponents (such as Martial Disarm) can use the maneuver's STR bonus to resist being Disarmed. This option prevents fencers and similar characters from constantly Disarming each other.

Disarming Incoming Attacks

A character can Hold his Action to Disarm an incoming attack. This happens especially often when a character makes a Half Move and then Holds his Action, waiting for his attacker to reach him. However, a Disarm versus an incoming attack doesn't automatically mean the attacker is Disarmed before he performs his attack. The characters must make DEX Rolls to see who goes first. If the Disarm rolls tie, or the character performing the Disarm succeeds with his DEX Roll by more, he goes first. If he successfully Disarms his opponent, the opponent doesn't get his to make his attack and can do nothing else this Phase. If the Disarm misses or fails, the opponent gets his attack this Phase. If the target of the Disarm makes his DEX Roll by more, he goes first and attacks before the Disarm attempt. If the Disarming character is not Stunned or Knocked Out by the attack, he can then perform the Disarm.

RANGED DISARMS

Characters can perform Disarms (but not Martial Disarms or the like) with ranged weapons — for example, by shooting a gun out of an enemy's hand. Determining the outcome of the attack is a two-step process.

First, the character has to make an Attack Roll to hit the weapon. He doesn't suffer the standard -2 OCV penalty for making a HTH Disarm; instead, the OCV penalty depends on the size of the weapon (or other object) he's trying to shoot out of the target's hand (see accompanying table).

Second, if the character hits the object, convert the Damage Classes of the attack into STR at the rate of 1 DC = 5 STR. The GM may rule that some Damage Classes (such as those provided by exotic types of bullets) don't count for purposes of calculating the "STR" of a shot. Once you know the attack's "STR," roll a STR Versus STR Contest in the standard method for the Disarm maneuver. For example, a 1d6+1 RKA bullet has 4 DC, which equals 20 STR for Disarm purposes, and would roll 4d6 to determine the "BODY damage" done by his STR for Disarming.

A Disarmed weapon usually ends up ½d6 inches away from its former holder in the direction the Disarming attack travels (Disarming player's choice, within reason). The GM decides whether the Disarmed weapon suffers damage.

You can also use this system to determine whether the force of a particular attack is enough to knock over an object. But the GM should apply some standards of "realism" to this sort of action — it isn't usually possible to tip over cars and other large objects with attacks, even if they have the "STR" to do it.

As an alternative to using the Disarm rules, characters can simply try to wound their enemies in ways that make them drop held objects. A character who takes an Impairing or Disabling wound to the Hand or Arm may drop whatever he's holding. The character makes an EGO Roll at -1 to the roll for each 2 BODY taken; if he succeeds, he maintains his grip, if he fails, he drops the held

object. Another alternative would be to use other appropriate powers, such as Teleportation Usable As Attack or Telekinesis, to remove the weapon from the target's grasp (in this case, the GM may want to impose the standard OCV penalty for targeting an object the size of the weapon, or perhaps the -6 for targeting the Hand).

DODGE

This Maneuver allows a character to avoid an attack. A character performing a Dodge can't attack, but is much harder to hit — he adds +3 DCV against all attacks. Characters can Abort to Dodge. Using Dodge counts as an Attack Action.

As noted on page 248 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* core rulebook, Dodge has no effect against Area Of Effect attacks, Explosions, and other area-affecting attacks — those attacks apply against the DCV 3 of the target hex, so the target's DCV is irrelevant. This applies even to HTH Combat attacks bought with those Advantages.

Some attacks, such as Sweep or a Multiple Move By, involve a sequence of attacks directed at the target in which if one of the attacks misses, all subsequent attacks automatically miss. For these purposes, successfully Dodging one of the attacks in the sequence counts as a "miss" and ends the sequence of attacks.

DODGE AND OTHER MANEUVER ELEMENTS

Using the Maneuver creation rules in *The Ultimate Martial Artist,* a character could create a Martial Maneuver that combines Dodge with an element such as Target Falls, thus allowing him to (for example) "trip" people who attack him. However, you must apply common sense when using such a Maneuver. For example, the Target Falls part of the maneuver would only affect HTH attackers, not persons who attack the character at range.

Some Martial Maneuvers might combine Dodge with other Martial Maneuver elements such as Grab or Throw. Since these maneuvers have an offensive or aggressive aspect to them, a character cannot Abort to them (even if he wants to use just the Dodge part of the maneuver).

TARGETING WEAPONS AND GADGETS

Weapon	Attack Roll Penalty
Assault Rifle	-3 to -5
Bow	-4 to -6 (this assumes the character is targeting the bow itself; targeting the bowstring would be a -12, but any hit to a bowstring will break it)
Crossbow	-3 to -6 (most crossbows are large and bulky enough that they're fairly easy to hit, but pistol crossbows are as difficult to target as a handgun)
Grenade	-6 to -7
Handgun	-5 to -8 (especially large handguns, such as the AMT Automag, would be -5; derringers and other small guns are -7 or -8. Most handguns are -6)
Knife	-5 to -8
Machine Gun	-2 to -5
Rifle	-3 to -4
Shotgun	-3 to -5
Submachine Gun	-4 to -6
Sword	-3 to -5

GRAB

This Maneuver allows a character to get a hold on another character or object.

Making A Grab

To Grab an opponent, a character must make an Attack Roll with appropriate modifiers. If successful, he has Grabbed his opponent. (As described below under *Escaping From Grabs,* the victim immediately gets a Casual STR roll to break free, if desired.)

The Grabber (the character performing the Grab) and Grabbed character both occupy the same hex. Typically this is the Grabber's hex. However, if the Grabber has a Half Phase Action available before attacking, he can specify in advance that he wants to move into the Grabbee's hex before Grabbing him.

A character may not be able to Grab targets significantly larger than himself. A human, no matter how strong, isn't really able to Grab a giant.

SQUEEZING AND THROWING

In many cases, a character Grabs his enemy just to hold onto him or prevent him from doing something, but sometimes the Grabber wants to hurt the target at the same time. A character who has Grabbed someone can do either of the following:

—*Squeeze* him or smash him against something. This does regular STR damage (STR/5 in d6 of Normal Damage) to the victim; the character retains his hold on the victim.

—*Throw* him. This does regular STR damage to the victim, and subjects him to the effects of a Throw (see *Martial Throw,* page 90), but typically requires the character to let go of the victim. See the Throwing Table, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 35, to determine how far the Grabber can Throw the Grabbed character (though he can choose just to Throw him to the ground in an adjacent hex [*i.e.,* to "slam" him], or the like).

If the Grabber chooses to Squeeze or Throw the Grabbed character in the same Segment in which he (the Grabber) successfully Grabbed him, the Squeeze or Throw does not require an Attack Roll (it automatically succeeds) and takes no time. A character cannot Hold this "free" action; he must use it in that same Segment. If the Grabber wants to Squeeze or Throw his victim in a later Phase, doing so is an Attack Action (it doesn't automatically succeed, requires an Attack Roll, and so forth).

Assume any Grab-and-Throw is a Standing Throw, unless the Grabber begins a Phase with a Grabbed victim and the GM lets him move before making the Throw.

A character may want to Grab-and-Throw something at a specific target (for example, to throw one enemy into another, or to pick up a live grenade and Throw it through an open window). To do this, he must make a separate Attack Roll against that target. Unless the GM rules otherwise, this is a separate Attack Action, so it cannot be performed in the same Phase when the character performs his Grab. The standard CV modifiers for Grab apply, and the GM may impose other modifiers to reflect the circumstances. If the attack succeeds, both the Thrown object and the target take the character's STR damage. (See page 134 for further information about using characters as missiles.)

If the Attack Roll for a Squeeze fails, the victim takes no damage but remains Grabbed. If the Attack Roll for a Throw fails, the victim is no longer Grabbed (unless the GM rules otherwise, as he might if the Throw is a slam) and suffers no effects of a Throw (he takes no damage, remains on his feet, and suffers no initiative penalty in relation to the character who threw him) (see below for more information).

After performing a Grab, in that same Segment a character can only Squeeze or Throw the target as an immediate attack. He can't use any other maneuvers or attacks (unless the GM so permits, and even in that case, using another attack should mean releasing the Grab in most circumstances). In later Phases he can use any attacks he wants (provided he has the free limbs or other means to do so).

If a Grab-based Maneuver (such as Martial Grab) provides a STR bonus, that bonus applies solely for the purposes of holding on to the target. It doesn't increase the damage done by Squeezing or Throwing the target, increase the distance a target can be thrown, or have any other effect. Similarly, characters can use Combat Skill Levels to increase their OCV or DCV when Grabbing, but not the damage done by Squeezing or Throwing.

A character cannot use his Hand-To-Hand Attack to improve the damage done by Squeezing or Throwing a Grabbed character. Nor can characters Haymaker Squeeze or Throw damage.

See page 134 for rules regarding using a Grabbed character as a "club" or "missile" against other characters.

Missed Throws

The basic effects of a missed attempt to Throw a Grabbed character are described above. If the Grabbing character was Throwing the victim for distance, the GM can determine where the Thrown character lands using the rules for missed area-affecting attacks or whatever other method seems appropriate to him.

A character cannot Throw a Grabbed person in an effort to hit another target (such as another character or a specific hex), miss that target, but still inflict Throw damage on the Thrown person.

A miss is a miss — the character chose a tactic that would have been especially effective if it had succeeded, so he has to live with severe consequences (doing no damage to anyone, even the Thrown character) if he fails.

If a character is "just" throwing a Grabbed victim for distance, with no intention of causing any injury, all he has to do is succeed with the Attack Roll to make the Throw, then consult the Throwing Table. The GM can determine exactly where the target "lands" using the rules for missed area-affecting attacks or whatever other method seems appropriate to him.

OTHER GRAB OPTIONS

As indicated above, after performing a Grab, in that same Segment a character can only Squeeze or Throw the target as an immediate attack; he can't use any other maneuvers or attacks unless the GM permits it.

At the GM's option, besides Squeezing or Throwing a Grabbed victim, characters can do any one of the following immediately after performing a Grab in that same Segment without the need for an additional Attack Roll. They can also perform them when they have Phases in later Segments (or, if appropriate, if they want to Abort to them), but they must first succeed with an Attack Roll, just like with Squeezing or Throwing in later Segments. These options are most appropriate for martial arts campaigns and the like.

PULLING THE SQUEEZE

Pulling A Punch applies to any HTH attack. If a character knows before performing a Grab that he wants to pull his Squeeze, or if the Squeeze is one performed in a Phase after the Grab and so requires an Attack Roll, then the OCV penalty applies as usual. If the character decides he'd like to Pull the Squeeze after he makes his Grab Attack Roll, the GM can either decide to let him do it with no penalty, or can require him to make another Attack Roll not for purposes of hitting but only for purposes of determining if the Pull succeeds.

SQUEEZING MULTIPLE TARGETS

In some situations, a character may want to Grab and Squeeze two characters. This could simulate, for example, smashing two enemies' heads to together, or simply be a clever combat tactics for a character with large arms. To do this, a character must Sweep Grab two targets, then Squeeze them both that same Phase if he succeeds. In later Phases he has to Sweep Squeeze (since Squeezing in later Phases counts as an attack), or choose which one to Squeeze.

COMBAT SKILL LEVELS WITH SQUEEZE OR THROW

Characters could apply the following types of Combat Skill Levels to a Throw made after Grabbing someone:

—CSLs with HTH Combat

—CSLs specifically bought for throwing Grabbed characters

CSLs for Grab would *not* apply, since this is a Throw, not a Grab. CSLs bought for Throw-based maneuvers (such as Martial Throw) would not apply, since a Throw after a Grab isn't a Throw-based maneuver.

Characters could apply the following types of Combat Skill Levels to a Squeeze made after Grabbing someone:

—CSLs with HTH Combat

—CSLs specifically bought for squeezing Grabbed characters

CSLs for Grab would *not* apply, since this is a Squeeze, not a Grab.

Grab and Block
Grab and Control
Grab and Redirect
Grab and Shove

A character can only use one of these additional functions in a Phase (just like he can't both Squeeze and Throw a victim). Having Grabbed a target, the character cannot Block and Redirect in the same Phase, or Block and Throw, or any other combination.

Grab And Block

With this combination, a character Grabs someone — and then, at any time while the Grab is still in effect, Blocks an incoming attack with the Grabbed character's body. To do this, he performs the Grab normally. If the Grabbed character does not immediately escape, the Grabber can perform a Block with his body. Roll the Block maneuver (or Martial Block maneuver) at a -2 to OCV (this replaces the normal ½ OCV the Grabber has against other targets). If it succeeds, the Grabber has Blocked the attack; the Grabbed character takes the damage of the incoming attack. You can only Block this way once per Phase, unlike ordinary Blocks.

If a character has Combat Skill Levels with Grab, he cannot apply them to the OCV of the Block of a Grab-and-Block combination.

This is a very useful maneuver for PCs. But villains can also Grab and Block, and are fond of doing so with captured DNPCs and other innocents.

Grab And Control

When a character Grabs someone, he can also attempt to *Control* that person, meaning turn the victim so he cannot attack the character as easily. To do this, he makes a STR Versus STR Roll with the victim. (If this is immediately after he Grabbed the victim and the victim's Phase hasn't yet come up, he does get a Casual STR roll.) If he rolls 2 BODY more than the victim on the STR Versus STR Roll, he can turn the victim so the victim cannot strike him this Segment. To maintain control, the character must make a similar roll on each of his Phases.

Grab and Control is very good for subduing someone a character wishes to speak to but not hurt; it does the victim no harm and gives the character a Phase or two to speak. A character can also use Grab and Control to force someone to the ground without hurting him (to force him to the ground and do STR damage to him in the process, Grab and Throw him, as described above.

Grab And Redirect

Redirect follows a Grab of someone's weapon. If a character Grabs a weapon, he may then make a STR Versus STR Roll to attack with it. If he succeeds (*i.e.,* he ties or betters the victim's BODY total), he can attack the weapon's wielder or a character in the same or an adjacent hex as the wielder. If his normal STR is enough to use the weapon, he doesn't suffer an OCV penalty. However, he only does the weapon's base damage; because the wielder of the weapon resists him, the character doesn't get to use any of his STR which exceeds the weapon's STR Minimum to increase the damage done by the weapon.

Characters can use Grab-and-Redirect with Ranged attacks, assuming appropriate special effects (such a maneuver might work very well with a gun, less well or not at all with a bow or throwing knife). Characters cannot apply Range Skill Levels with a Redirect, though.

If a character has Combat Skill Levels with Grab, he cannot apply them to the OCV of, or damage caused with, the Redirect of a Grab-and-Redirect combination. Nor can he apply Extra DCs to increase the damage of that maneuver.

Grab And Shove

Once a character has Grabbed someone, he may attempt to Shove the victim backwards. He makes a STR Versus STR Roll. If he succeeds, he may shove the victim back a maximum of 1". He moves with the victim and continues to hold on to him as he does so.

A character may perform this option even after he's performed a Half Move and Grab/Shove. For example, a character with 7" of Running moves 4" forward and Grabs his target successfully. He can now elect to Shove his target back 1", even though, at Phase's end, he's moved a total of 5" (more than his Half Move) and still performed an attack.

Shoving does no damage to a target unless he's shoved into a surface such as a wall; in that case, he takes the character's STR damage. A STR 18 character shoving a target into a wall will do 3½d6 Normal Damage to that target. If the campaign uses Hit Locations, this is just generalized damage.

Anyone who Grabs can Shove. There's also a special martial Shove maneuver which allows characters to shove more effectively. Refer to *Shove,* below, for more details.

Further Options

The GM may allow other optional "uses" for Grab as a multiple-power attack. For example, a large monster could Grab-and-Squeeze a character with its mouth and also use its fangs (an HKA) as part of a multiple-power attack.

MULTIPLE GRABS

In some situations, two or more characters may want to perform Grabs on the same target. For purposes of analyzing this situation, assume three characters: A, B, and C.

Suppose C has Grabbed B. A also wants to Grab B. If C is willing to have A help him hold B, A simply makes a normal Attack Roll against B's DCV (which is reduced by the Grab, of course). To break free B must defeat the higher of A's and C's STRs. Alternately, the GM can add A's and C's lifting capacities together to determine their "group STR," as described on page 6 of *The Ultimate Brick* (or page 95 of this book regarding Shove), and B has to break free from that. If B only wants to free the part of his body held by one of his captors, he has to make his STR Roll versus that person's STR, but if he succeeds he only frees that part of his body.

If C doesn't want A to Grab B (maybe A is trying to pull B free), A has to make his Attack Roll

against the higher of C's DCV or B's DCV. If A succeeds, he can then engage in a STR Versus STR Contest with C to free B (B takes no damage from this, unless the GM feels it would be appropriate to apply some measure of the STR involved to reflect the tugging on B's body).

Instead of trying to free B by Grabbing him, A might instead Grab C and then try to pry his arms from around B. He makes a Grab attack against C as normal (keep in mind that C has a reduced DCV from performing a Grab on B). A may then pit his STR against C in a STR Versus STR Contest to pry C's arms from around B, and if he succeeds, he frees B.

GRABBING A MOVING CHARACTER

Sometimes a character may want to Grab a character who's moving. When a moving character is Grabbed, he immediately gets a standard Casual STR Roll to break out. If the GM is using the optional rule on page 26 regarding the effect of movement on STR, then the character's Casual STR would be calculated with that in mind. If the roll succeeds, the character keeps moving until the end of his declared inches of movement (assuming he wasn't there already). If the roll fails, the character is reduced to 0" of movement and remains in the hex where he was Grabbed. He has to break out in the usual fashion, without gaining any STR benefit from movement.

Typically a Grabbed character cannot use any form of movement to keep moving while Grabbed, dragging the Grabbing character along. He may be able to use his movement to improve his STR to break free (see page 26), but that's all (though Teleportation lets a character escape from most Grabs easily). Even if the GM chooses to allow this (at least for some special effects), the Grabbed character may be subject to Encumbrance rules for carrying so much weight.

MOVING WITH A GRABBED CHARACTER

Unless some other rule (like the weight limit for Teleportation, or Encumbrance) prevents it, typically a character who has the STR to pick up a target he's Grabbed can move the Grabbed person with him as he moves. With the GM's permission, he might even be able to move fast enough to slam the Grabbed person into something and do extra damage to him. This is a form of Grab and Throw that requires the character to let go of the Grabbed person after making no more than a Half Move (since the Throw itself, as an attack, requires at least a Half Phase Action to perform). The character may add his velocity divided by 5 (velocity/5) in d6 of damage to his STR damage for the Throw (to a maximum dice equal to the DEF+BODY of the object the victim is slammed into). The GM may restrict or forbid this form of attack to preserve game balance, in the interest of dramatic sense, or the like.

Escaping From Grabs

When a Grabbed character tries to escape from his captor, both characters roll 1d6 for each 5 STR they have and count the Normal Damage BODY. If the Grabbed character's total is higher, he escapes; if the Grabber's total is higher or the rolls tie, the victim remains Grabbed. Trying to break out of a Grab does no damage to either character.

The rules for Casual STR (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 34) mean very strong characters can effectively ignore Grabs performed by much weaker foes. A Grabbed character should be allowed to roll his Casual STR immediately after being Grabbed, if desired (even if he doesn't have a Zero Phase Action available; this initial attempt to break free is an Action that takes no time, though the character can only try it once, right after he's first Grabbed). The Grabbing character gets his entire Grabbing STR to resist this breakout attempt; he's not restricted to using just his Casual STR.

A character attempting to escape immediately with Casual STR may apply half his STR bonus from an Escape-based Martial Maneuver (such as Martial Escape), but may not apply bonus dice from using Contortionist, a Movement Power, or the like. In later Phases, he may use half the bonuses from Contortionist and/or Movement Powers to increase a Casual STR roll to break out, but using either or both converts the use of Casual STR to a Half Phase Action. He can add full Contortionist and/or Movement Power bonuses to a normal, full-STR damage roll to break free.

A character cannot Abort his next Phase to use his full STR the very same moment he's Grabbed, unless the GM specifically permits this on the grounds that it's "defensive" because being free from a Grab prevents the character from suffering the usual DCV penalty therefor.

A character may not use a Ranged Attack that exerts force (such as an Energy Blast) to break free from a Grab, even if it has the *No Range* Limitation.

The standard rules for Grab indicate that the victim's STR damage roll to break free must exceed the Grabber's roll — in other words, ties go to the Grabber, not the victim. As an option, the GM can rule that ties go to *the stronger character.* That way a character with, say, STR 41 derives a little extra benefit from spending that extra point when he's wrestling with a character who has STR 40.

See page 134 for more information on escaping Grabs, including the time required and the Actions available to the character after he breaks free.

The Effects Of Grab

Grab immobilizes two of the target's limbs (usually his arms; see below) and reduces his CV. The Grabber can attempt to Sweep with his Grab to immobilize more than two limbs (or more than the defined number of limbs for the maneuver, in the case of Grab-based Martial Maneuvers). Each limb (or group thereof, if the maneuver immobilizes two or more limbs at its basic level) counts as a separate attack.

OTHER WAYS TO ESCAPE FROM GRABS

Here are some other tricks characters can use to break free from Grabs:

Growth: If a Grabbed character activates the *Growth* Power, he may automatically be able to break free from a Grab. Alternately, the GM can convert the Growing character's growth momentum to STR (on a 1d6 = +5 STR basis) to determine the effect of growing out of a Grab. (See *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 183 regarding growth momentum.)

Shrinking: Shrinking to half a character's size or less allows him to slip out of a Grab automatically if he beats the character Grabbing him in a DEX Roll Versus DEX Roll Contest. (At the GM's option, the shrinking character may use his *Power: Shrinking Tricks* Skill instead, if he has it.)

Stretching: Depending on the special effects of a character's Stretching, the GM may allow him to escape from a Grab automatically by Stretching or contorting his malleable body, or may grant him STR bonuses solely for purposes of determining if he can escape.

Teleportation: Unless the special effects of the power indicate otherwise, a character can Teleport out of a Grab by making a Half Move or Full Move with Teleportation.

While the Grabber immobilizes the Grabbed character's arms, the Grabbed character cannot use most handheld weapons and Accessible Foci. (See *Attacks By The Grabbed Character* on page 67.)

GRABBING WITH ONLY ONE HAND

The Grabber must use both hands/arms to gain the full effect of a Grab. If he uses only one hand, he is at -5 STR to hold on (but can use his other arm to make other attacks in later Phases); he still suffers the usual CV penalties for performing a Grab. If a Grab-based Maneuver (such as Martial Grab) provides a STR bonus, a character performing a one-handed Grab can only use half of the STR bonus. If a Grab-based Martial Maneuver specifies that it only immobilizes one Limb (*i.e.,* it takes the "One Limb" restrictive element), it only require one hand to perform at full STR.

Example: *Ken the sumo wrestler is STR 20. He executes a Sumo Grab on his opponent, but uses only one hand, the better to pummel his foe with the other. Ken normally uses his full STR of 20 and gets a +10 STR from the Grab maneuver. But this time, using only one hand, he gets only STR 15 and +5 STR from the Grab maneuver (total of STR 20).*

If a character Grabs another character with just one hand, that typically means both characters have at least one free hand. They can use their free hands to attack each other if they want to. Standard Grab modifiers (which include OCV penalties for the Grabbed character to attack the Grabber) apply. Technically the Grabber could squeeze the Grabbed character, but the GM might want to restrict that depending on the exact arrangement (*e.g.,* if the Grabber has only Grabbed the victim by the arm, inflicting damage by squeezing probably doesn't make much sense).

TARGETABLE LIMBS

Characters are considered to have five limbs: two arms, two legs, and one head. The head counts as a limb because a character can use it to attack (*i.e.,* headbutt) an opponent close enough to Grab him. The standard Grab, attacks defined as joint-locks, and similar attacks normally Grab one to two limbs, "pins" and bearhug-type holds, such as those used in Wrestling, may Grab three or more limbs. A character can always choose to Grab fewer limbs than the maximum allowed by his maneuver.

Example: *Okamura Hiromi is using her Jujutsu to fight a big, tough street thug wielding a pair of knives. She wants to capture him for interrogation. However, her Joint Lock maneuver only immobilizes one limb (typically, one arm), leaving her vulnerable to being stabbed by the knife the thug is carrying in his other hand. She also prefers to prevent him from kicking her with his hobnail boots.*

Since she has a 12 OCV and the thug only has a 5 DCV, Hiromi decides to try to Grab both of his arms and one of his legs. This requires her to Sweep him with her Joint Lock. The Joint Lock immobilizes one limb, so each additional limb counts as a separate target, imposing a -4 on each of her Attack Rolls. She rolls a 14, an 11, and a 10, hitting all three times. In the space of but a second, she has used her martial arts to almost completely immobilize the thug. Now she can bear him to the ground so he can't stomp on her foot with his free leg.

Had Hiromi missed one of her rolls, no further rolls would be allowed and all remaining target limbs would have been free to move.

Example: *Suppose the thug in the above example faces Strongarm, a low-level "brick" superhero. Strongarm isn't any more willing to be stabbed or stomped on by this miscreant than Hiromi was, even though he's harder to hurt. Since a basic Grab immobilizes two limbs, each additional two limbs impose a cumulative -2 on each of his Attack Rolls. He decides to Sweep his Grab, so he can Grab the thug's arms and legs. This imposes a -2 to both of his rolls, since the arms count as his first two limbs, and the legs as his second two limbs. He rolls a 7 and a 10, easily hitting both times. The thug is now trussed up like a Thanksgiving turkey.*

GRAB'S EFFECT ON COMBAT VALUE

When a character tries to Grab another character, he suffers the standard -2 DCV penalty listed on the Combat Maneuvers Table. If the Grab succeeds, the Grabber suffers the ½ DCV penalty described below — this replaces the -2 DCV penalty, it's not in addition to it.

Example: *Defender (DCV 8) attempts to Grab Devastator. He's at -2 DCV, giving him DCV 6. He misses. He remains at DCV 6 until his next Phase.*

*But suppose Defender hits Devastator. He's now Grabbing someone, so he has ½ DCV, giving him DCV 4. The ½ DCV penalty replaces the standard -2 DCV penalty instead of adding to it (*i.e., *he's not DCV 3).*

A Grabbed character has ½ DCV against all attacks. The Grabber also has ½ DCV against all attacks (both those from other characters, and any the Grabbed character may be able to launch) — concentrating on holding someone leaves the character more open to attack.

The Grabbed character may be able to attack the Grabbing character at -3 OCV (or another character at ½ OCV), but this requires an appropriate free limb or other means of attack, and the GM may rule that a Grabbed character cannot perform some attacks or Maneuvers. The character performing the Grab has his full OCV against the Grabbed character and is ½ OCV against other targets. At the GM's option, some of the penalties the Grabber suffers may be reduced if his STR is 20 or more points greater than the Grabbed character's STR (see accompanying text box).

GRAB AND COMBAT VALUE

The standard CV penalties for performing a successful Grab are:

Grabber:	½ DCV against all attackers (including Grabbed character)
	Full OCV against the Grabbed character
	½ OCV against other targets (if attacks are possible at all)
Grabbed:	½ DCV against all attackers (including Grabber)
	-3 OCV against the Grabber (if attacks are possible at all)
	½ OCV against other targets (if attacks are possible at all)

At the GM's option, if the Grabber's STR is 20 or more points higher than the Grabbed character's STR, change the penalties to the following:

Grabber:	-2 DCV against all attackers (including Grabbed character)
	Full OCV against the Grabbed character
	-1 OCV against other targets (if attacks are possible at all)

Attacks By The Grabbed Character

As noted above, a Grabbed character can try to attack the person Grabbing him. (At the GM's option, he might be allowed to attack some other character instead, using the same abilities with which he could attack his captor.) The sorts of attacks a Grabbed character can use in this situation depend largely on the special effects involved, common sense, dramatic sense, and the circumstances. He can never use Accessible Foci (but see below regarding weapons), and he can always use his own raw STR to try to break free or hurt the character Grabbing him. Beyond that, the GM has to decide whether he can or cannot use an attack, adjust the rules for each specific situation, based on the special effects and characters involved. As a default rule:

—the Grabbed character can use any of his own attacks against the character Grabbing him, but cannot use Combat or Martial Maneuvers unless the GM so permits (since those typically require a degree of movement and mobility the character cannot achieve when Grabbed)

—the Grabbed character can only use attacks that are "free" (unhindered by the Grab — such as eyebeams) against other targets

On important factor for the GM to keep in mind is the number of limbs Grabbed. If the attacker only Grabs one limb, or the victim has Extra Limbs that are fully manipulable, then the victim may be able to use his free limbs to attack freely, wield Accessible Foci, or the like.

A Grabbed character usually finds it impossible to use weapons, since they're Accessible Foci. However, in some situations, he might have a limb free with which he could draw and use a weapon (possibly suffering Off Hand penalties, depending on what limb he has free). Assuming weapons use is even possible, a Grabbed character can use any Short weapon at no additional penalty, any Medium weapon at an additional -2 penalty to OCV, and any Long weapon at an additional -5 penalty to OCV. These penalties are in addition to those imposed by the Grab itself.

GRAB AND HIT LOCATIONS

By default, a Grab immobilizes the target's arms and accessible Foci. This presumes the Grabbing character either specifies the arms as a target or does not specify any particular target.

Within the bounds of realism, characters can choose which limbs to immobilize with a Grab maneuver. With a standard Grab, the maneuver almost always affects the two arms, but with a Martial Grab just about any combination is possible.

Regardless of which limb the character chooses as a target, Hit Location Attack Roll and damage modifiers *do not apply*, just like with any maneuver defined as specifically targeting a Hit Location.

At the GM's option, a character may suffer penalties to a standard Grab maneuver if he tries to Grab anything other than the arms or the head. If the campaign uses Hit Locations or the character specifies an attack against Location 5 (the Head), a Grab maneuver hitting Location 5 (the Head) and involving a Squeeze both does extra damage (Head locations take 2x STUN and BODY from Normal Damage attacks) and cuts off the target's breath, making him unable to shout or talk (see the rules above for Choke Holds). A Grab maneuver hitting Locations 3 and 4 does the extra damage, but doesn't cut off the victim's breath with a Squeeze.

GRABBING AND BEING STUNNED OR KNOCKED OUT

A Grabber who is Stunned automatically lets go of the Grabbed person (or object) at the end of the Segment unless he succeeds with an EGO Roll. The roll suffers a penalty of -1 per 10 points of STUN damage (or fraction thereof) the character took from the attack that Stunned him (after defenses). At the GM's option, even if the character maintains his grip, a Grabbed person may receive a bonus to break free (such as +5 or +10 STR) until the Grabber recovers from being Stunned.

A Grabber who is Knocked Out automatically lets go of the Grabbed person (or object) at the end of the Segment.

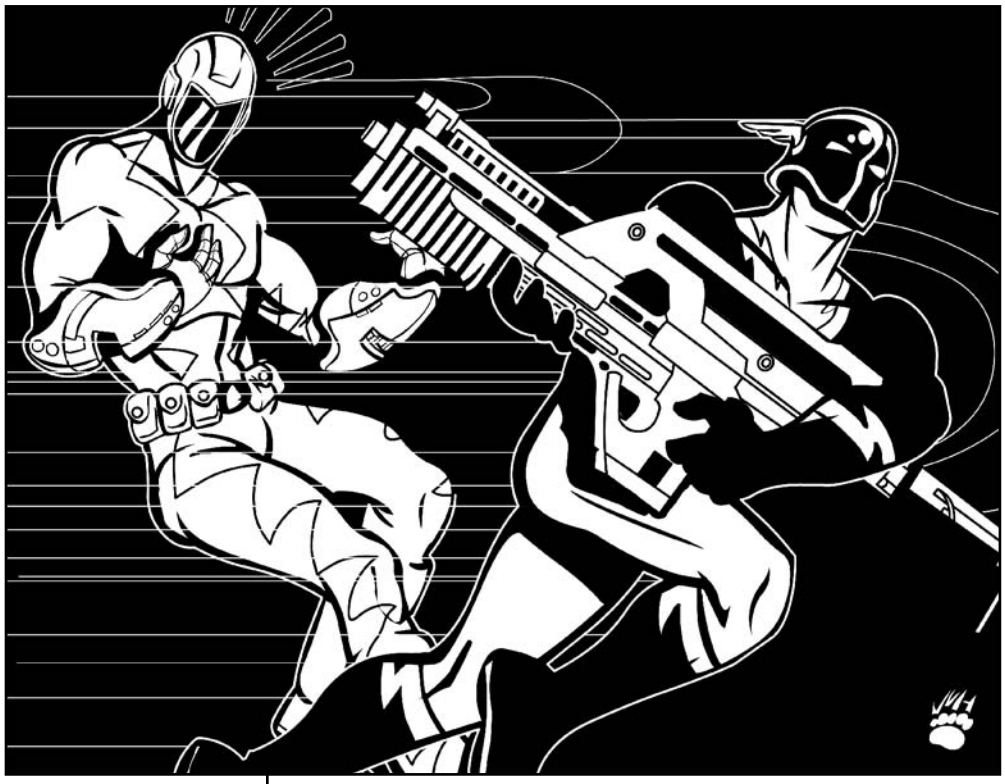
GRAB AND KNOCKBACK

A Grabbed character may be attacked by a third party and suffer Knockback (or maybe even suffer Knockback from the Grabber, if the Grabber has more limbs free to attack with). Similarly, a Grabbing character could be attacked and suffer Knockback. In either case, determine the number of inches of Knockback normally. Then roll the Knockback damage dice (the full amount, as if the character had hit an obstacle) in a "Strength" Versus Strength Contest against the Grabber's STR. If the Knockback wins the contest, the Grabbed character is knocked out of the Grab and the character who

VOLUNTARY GRABS

If a character wants to be Grabbed (perhaps to let another character throw or carry him), there's probably no need for any rolls other than the Attack Roll — and maybe not even that. It's all up to the GM. He might, for example, require a character to make STR Rolls to hang on to a target that's moving quickly or erratically, even if it doesn't mind "giving the character a lift." If the target doesn't want to be Grabbed, then STR Rolls are necessary to represent whatever efforts it makes to break free, unless for some reason it chooses not to make STR Rolls. If the GM rules the target's making no such efforts, he can rule that the Grabber automatically wins the contest. As always, common sense, dramatic sense, and considerations of game balance should apply.

A Grabber cannot let a Grabbed character maintain his full OCV and DCV, even if the Grabbed character voluntarily submits to the Grab.



was attacked travels a number of inches equal to the ((inches of KB) - (BODY rolled for Grabber's STR)). Resolve the damage from those inches of Knockback traveled normally. If the Grabber wins the contest, the character takes no Knockback, and no damage from Knockback.

Example: *Squeeze (STR 40) has Grabbed Brainwave. One of Squeeze's allies takes advantage of Brainwave's reduced DCV to shoot him with an Energy Blast that does 15 BODY damage. The GM rolls 5 on the 2d6 for determining Knockback, so Brainwave would ordinarily take 10" of Knockback. The GM rolls the 10d6 in a "Strength" Versus Strength Contest against Squeeze. The GM rolls 10 BODY, and Squeeze rolls 8. So, Brainwave is knocked out of Squeeze's grip and travels (10-8) 2", taking 2d6 Knockback damage.*

The same rules apply to Knockdown.

GRABS AND MOVEMENT

When a character Grabs a moving target, the target immediately gets a standard Casual STR Roll to break out. If the GM is using the optional rule on page 26 regarding the effect of movement on STR, then you should calculate the character's Casual STR with that in mind. If the roll succeeds, the target breaks free and keeps moving until the end of his declared inches of movement (assuming he wasn't there already). If the roll fails, the target's movement immediately drops to 0" (this does not cause him damage), and he's Grabbed in the attacker's hex. He has to break out in the usual fashion, without gaining any STR benefit from movement.

Grab Weapon

A character can choose to Grab a target's weapon, Accessible Focus, or other held or carried object instead of the target himself. Such attacks are at -2 OCV in addition to all other modifiers. If the attacker successfully makes the Grab, then he has his hands on the target's weapon or Focus and can attempt to wrench it away. In this case, use normal Grab rules to see if the attacker succeeds. Until one character gains control of the weapon, neither character can use it. As an optional rule, the GM may want to assign additional penalties (-1 to -3) if one character is fighting with a much shorter weapon (simulating the fact that it's harder for a character with a short weapon to get close enough to one with a longer weapon to Grab that weapon). The Grabbing character take no damage from touching or grabbing hold of the weapon.

When Grabbing a weapon, Focus, or object, a character's DCV is only reduced during the Segment in which the object was Grabbed — his DCV returns to normal at the beginning of the next Segment (assuming he has control of the object).

GRAB BY

Grab By is essentially a combination of Grab (as it pertains to weapons and Foci, and sometimes to people) and Move By. It allows a character to make a Full Move past another character and Grab an object that person's holding, or to do things like flying through the air and catching a falling person. The character suffers OCV and DCV penalties combining those of Grab and Move By.

When the character performs the Grab, in addition to the penalties for the maneuver he suffers the -2 OCV penalty if he attempts to Grab an Accessible Focus, weapon, or object. However, if the Grab succeeds, he does not suffer the typical reduction to DCV caused by Grabbing someone. He only suffers the DCV penalty for the Maneuver itself (-4) during the Segment in which the object was Grabbed — his DCV returns to normal at the beginning of the next Segment (assuming he has control of the object).

The character's velocity divided by 5 adds to his STR (not his STR dice) only for purposes of succeeding with the Grab. Otherwise, standard rules for Grabbing weapons and Foci apply, as appropriate (*e.g.,* the victim can immediately make a Casual STR roll to hold onto the object). Standard rules for Move Bys also apply, as appropriate; characters can make Multiple Grab Bys if they so desire, at the same additional penalty as for Multiple Move Bys. At the GM's option, characters may use Teleportation to perform a Grab By (at no STR bonus), even though it cannot be used to perform

Move Bys. Characters cannot combine Grab By with Move By/Through, taking objects from some targets and hitting others (unless the GM allows this as some sort of Sweep).

Example: *Defender wants to snatch an enchanted staff out of an evil sorcerer's grasp. He plots out his movement path, flies by him at 25", and performs a Grab By. His normal CV is 10; it is reduced to OCV 7, DCV 6 by the maneuver, and he loses another 2 points of OCV for trying to Grab an object, so his final OCV is 5. Fortunately for him, the sorcerer only has a DCV of 5, so an Attack Roll of 9 succeeds. He rolls 12d6 (11d6 for his base 55 STR, +1d6 for +5 STR for his velocity (25/5)) while the sorcerer rolls 3d6 (for his 15 STR). Defender easily wins the contest and takes the staff away from the sorcerer. Defender's DCV is not halved, only reduced by 4 for the Maneuver.*

HAYMAKER

A Haymaker is basically an all-out attack — the character takes extra time to "wind up" a punch, put extra force into his Energy Blast, aim carefully to hit a vital spot, focus the power of his mind particularly well, or otherwise attack the target powerfully. It offers the chance to do extra damage, but at the risk of the target moving or the character being hit while he's standing still and preparing to attack.

Haymaker applies to any attack, not just punches. This includes Mental Powers and other attacks that don't involve physical force. For example, a character could Haymaker his Drain STR, his Ego Attack, his Major Transform, or his Telekinesis. He could even Haymaker an appropriate Presence Attack in a situation where he suffers the drawbacks from Haymakering (such as combat). When a character Haymakers an unusual attack, the GM determines how much damage or effect the Haymaker adds (see accompanying text box). A character cannot Haymaker with an entire multiple-power attack. He may Haymaker with one of the powers in a multiple-power attack; the standard penalties for Haymaker then apply to the multiple-power attack as a whole.

Haymaker takes an extra Segment to execute. The character begins the attack on one of his Phases (this only requires a Half Phase Action; the character could, for example, make a Half Move to the target first). However, he doesn't actually launch the attack until the very end of the next Segment, after all characters who can act in that Segment have acted. The character may Abort to a defensive Action in the Segment in which the Haymaker goes off, but doing so ruins the Haymaker.

Example: *A character with a Phase in Segment 6 declares he's going to Haymaker his Punch (a Strike). He begins the attack on his Phase in Segment 6, but the blow won't land until the very end of Segment 7, after all characters in Segment 7 have taken their Actions. He could Abort to, say, Block in Segment 7 before the Haymaker goes off, but if so he loses the attack.*

UNUSUAL HAYMAKERS

Here are some guidelines for quick-and-easy adjudication of the effect of unusual Haymakers:

Drain: Haymaker adds +2d6 to any Drain.

Entangle: Haymaker adds +2d6 for purposes of determining the Entangle's BODY; it doesn't add any DEF. At the GM's option, a character can Haymaker his STR when trying to escape from a Grab or Entangle (but this means breaking out automatically takes a Full Phase, regardless of how well the character breaks out). Since many of the difficulties involved with performing a Haymaker don't matter when a character's trying to break out of a Grab or Entangle, the GM may prefer not to allow this.

Firearms: A character can Haymaker a gunshot, unless the GM forbids him to. This could represent carefully aiming to hit the most vulnerable part of a target.

Flash: Haymaker adds +4d6 to any Flash, regardless of the number and type of Sense Groups affected.

Grab: A character cannot Haymaker a Grab or Haymaker the Squeeze or Throw damage he can do to a Grabbed opponent. He could Grab a target with less than all of his manipulatory limbs, then use one of his free limbs to make a Haymaker Strike on the Grabbed target in a later Phase (in doing so he'd suffer all the penalties for both Grab and Haymaker, though).

Mental Powers: Haymaker adds +2d6 to an Ego Attack, or +4d6 to any continuing-effect Mental Power (such as Mind Control). This still reduces the character's DCV; his DECV is unaffected (unless the GM rules otherwise, which might be appropriate in situations where the character has a significant chance of being counterattacked with Mental Powers).

Presence Attack: Haymaker adds +4d6 to any Presence Attack.

Telekinesis: Haymaker adds +2½d6 to Telekinesis when it's used to attack, or +13 STR when used to Grab (or the like).

Transform: Haymaker adds +4d6 to a Cosmetic Transform, +2d6 to a Minor Transform, and +1d6+1 to a Major Transform.

Haymaker adds four Damage Classes to the damage of the attack used. Haymaker is a Maneuver in and of itself — a character cannot, for example, do a Haymaker with an Offensive Strike. (The *Strike* Maneuver is an exception to this, since it represents the "default" attack; most Haymakers characters perform are with some type of Strike.) He can perform a Haymaker with a Normal Damage or Killing Damage weapon (see *Adding Damage,* page 106, for more information).

There are several risks to performing a Haymaker. First, the character's DCV is greatly reduced. Second, if the target moves 1" or more before the Haymaker is used, the character suffers any Knockback, or the character is Stunned or Knocked Out, the Haymaker fails and the character has wasted his Phase. At the GM's option, other events, such as the character taking a large amount of damage, may also prevent a Haymaker from being used. These

RELATIVE VELOCITY

As noted in the main text, the damage from Move By, Move Through, and other velocity-based maneuvers usually depends on the characters' relative velocity.

If the target of a Throw is standing still, his velocity is 0" and adds no damage to the attack. If he's Thrown in a Segment in which he doesn't have a Phase but the GM judges that he is "moving" (*e.g.,* he's in mid-air or mid-run in a situation when he moved last Phase and is obviously going to keep moving in his next Phase), the GM can assign him whatever velocity seems appropriate. As always, apply common sense and dramatic sense.

rules apply regardless of what type of attack the character Haymakers with.

A character pays the END for the STR or power used to perform a Haymaker in the Segment in which he launches the attack (*i.e.,* the Segment after he begins the attack); if the attack fails or cannot be performed for any reason, he must still pay the END. For example, if a character begins a Haymaker during his Phase in Segment 6, he pays the END for it in Segment 7. With STR, this means he pays END for it even if he used his STR for other purposes during his Phase in the previous Segment.

High-SPD Haymakers

At SPD 7 and above, characters can have Phases in two or more consecutive Segments. If a character begins a Haymaker in a Phase before a Phase in a consecutive Segment, he's still performing the Haymaker in the next Segment, and therefore loses his Phase in that Segment.

Example: *Thunderbolt (SPD 8) begins a Haymaker in his Phase in Segment 2. He's SPD 8, so he also has a Phase in Segment 3 — but since he doesn't finish his Haymaker until the end of Segment 3, he loses his Phase in that Segment.*

MOVE BY

This Maneuver allows a character to attack while doing a Full Move past his target. The character simply thrusts out an arm, fist, leg, tail, other appendage, or weapon and hits his opponent as he moves by him. Move By is a Maneuver in and of itself — a character cannot, for example, do a Move By with an Offensive Strike. Characters cannot perform Move Bys with Ranged attacks.

To use Move By, the character must plot his entire movement path and then make his Attack Roll. The target can be at any point along the hero's intended path. Hit or miss, the character finishes at the end of his movement path. The character must be able to move at least 1" to perform a Move By. Characters cannot perform Move Bys with Ranged attacks.

A successful Move By does half of the character's regular STR damage plus (velocity/5)d6 Normal Damage to the target (in other words, (STR/2) + (vel/5)d6) (it's not limited to double the amount of STR dice the character has). (Halve a character's STR before determining the STR damage he does with a Move Through; that eliminates potential problems with trying to halve a half-die of damage.) However, the character himself takes one-third of the STUN and BODY damage done to the target. He cannot avoid this damage by taking *Personal Immunity* on his STR or Movement Power, but his appropriate defenses apply against it. The character doesn't necessarily have to travel his Full Move to get the damage for his full velocity; see *Acceleration, Deceleration, And Gravity,* page 25. If a target Blocks a Move By, the character making the unsuccessful Move By attack does not take any damage.

COMMON MOVE BY/ THROUGH RULES

Several rules apply to both Move By and Move Through.

Relative Velocity

Since the damage from a Move By or Move Through depends on velocity, it's the characters' *relative velocity* that matters when determining it. (Determine the OCV penalty the character performing the Move By/Through suffers solely from his own velocity, however.)

"Relative" velocity refers to the relationship between the velocities of the attacker and his target — sometimes they add together, sometimes they cancel each other out. For example, if two attackers rush together at 8" each, their relative velocity is 16"; the Move Through gets +5d6 damage. If one runs toward the other at 6", the relative velocity is 6" and the Move Through gets +2d6 damage. If the attacker runs at 10", and the victim runs away from him at 4", the relative velocity is 6" and the Move Through gets +2d6 damage.

Stunning And Movement

Because a character takes half or full damage from his own Move By/Through, he could Stun or Knock himself Out by performing the Maneuver.

With a Move By, the character has to plot his entire movement path before performing the maneuver, as detailed in the text. If he's Stunned or Knocked Out, the plotted movement path still applies, even if it means he's tumbling along the ground, unconscious, due to momentum.

With a Move Through, the character should have already declared which of the three "follow-through" options — move with the target, keep moving to the end of his own movement, or stop in the hex where he hit the target — he wants to use. If he's Stunned or Knocked Out, the declared condition still applies, even if it means tumbling along the ground, unconscious, due to momentum.

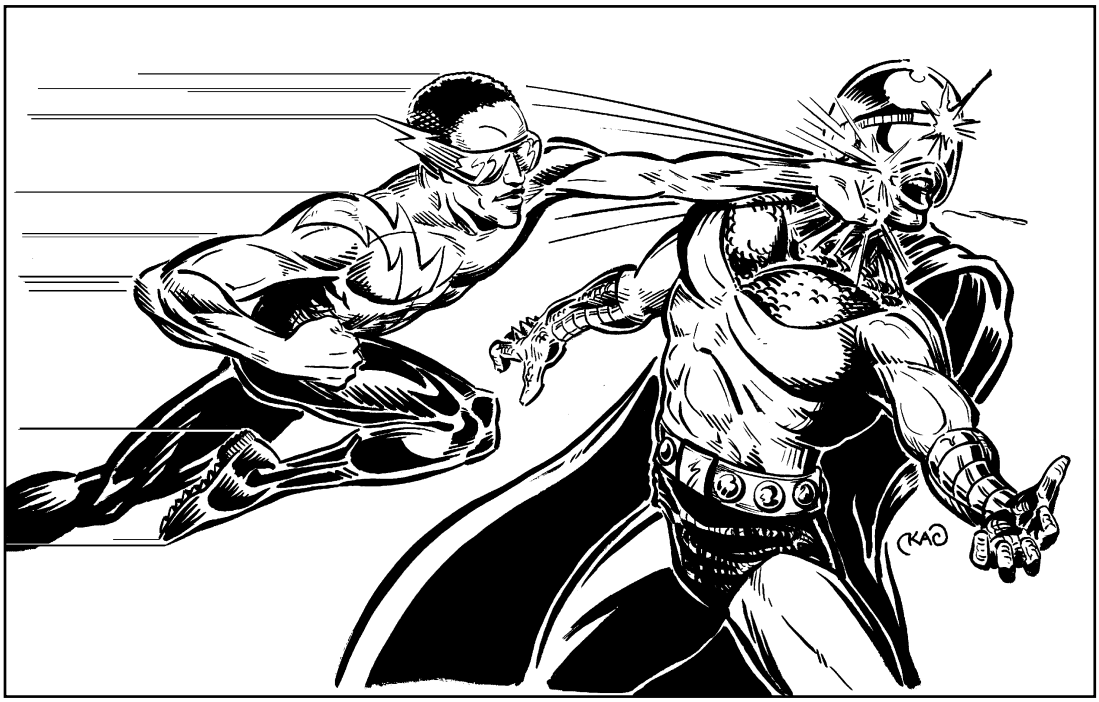
Alternately, the GM could declare, based on special effects, the circumstances, common sense, and dramatic sense, that the character stops moving where he is when Stunned or Knocked Out.

Hand-To-Hand Attack

If a character performs a Move By/Through, he can add his Hand-To-Hand Attack damage to it, provided the GM believes that makes sense based on the special effects of the HA and the Combat Maneuver. For example, if the HA is defined as a club, a character might be able to run past someone and smash them with it (Move By), but couldn't use those HA dice when tackling someone (Move Through). In some cases, such as the *Battering Ram* speedster power in *The UNTIL Superpowers Database,* a character might buy HA with a Limitation indicating that it *only* works with Move By/Through. In any event, the damage from the HA dice should not be halved, though the GM is free to do so if he feels that's necessary to maintain game balance.

Advantages On STR

If a character has an Advantage on his STR that affects how it does damage (such as Armor Piercing), that Advantage does not apply to the damage he takes from performing a Move By/Through. However, the GM may change this rule if he believes it's causing game balance problems.



Example: *Starburst (Flight 15") is 5" away from Ogre. He does a Move By on the villain and ends up 10" away from Ogre at the end of the Maneuver. The villain takes ½ of Starburst's STR damage plus 15/5 = 3d6 for Starburst's velocity. Starburst has a 15 STR, so the villain takes (½ x 3d6) + 3d6 = 4½d6 of damage. Starburst will take one third of the damage himself, but this will bounce off of his PD.*

Characters may not perform Move Bys with Extra-Dimensional Movement, FTL Travel, Teleportation, or any MegaScaled movement. However, they can perform them at Noncombat Movement speeds with other forms of movement (though this means the character has OCV 0; see pages 24-25).

A character may perform a Move By with a weapon or a Killing Attack; see *Adding Damage,* page 106. Divide the character's STR by 2 for purposes of calculating extra damage or DC/OCV penalties based on the weapon's STR Minimum. The weapon, not the character, takes the one-third damage from the Move By. If the BODY damage done to the target exceeds three times (3x) the weapon's base Damage Classes, the weapon breaks. If a character makes a Move By with a natural Killing Attack (say, his claws), the damage he takes is the equivalent DCs of Normal Damage, not Killing Damage. Characters cannot use other innate attacks (such as a "Shock Touch" [No Range Energy Blast]) with Move By without the GM's permission; if the GM grants permission, he determines the Maneuver's effect (if any) on the attack.

MULTIPLE MOVE BYS

A character can perform more than one Move By in a Phase. A character can do a Multiple Move By on one target or on several different ones. A Multiple Move By takes a cumulative -2 OCV for *all* the attacks the character makes that Phase. Thus, when a character decides to do a Multiple Move By on four agents, he suffers a -8 OCV when attacking each agent. He must make a separate Attack Roll for each target. Once the attacker misses one of his Move Bys, all subsequent Move Bys automatically miss as well. The character spends END for STR once for the Phase, plus the END for movement.

If a character performs a Multiple Move By on one target (by moving in a circle and hitting him repeatedly), he can only make an attack each time he returns to the first hex he attacked from. If an attacker moved in a tight circle around a target, the attacker would have to travel through 5 hexes before he returned to his original hex. He could only attack the target each time he came back to the original hex.

Example: *Starburst decides to try a Multiple Move By on Ogre's three henchmen (each of whom is DCV 4). Starburst suffers a -6 OCV penalty on all of these attacks, so his OCV is only 3. His first Attack Roll is a 10, which hits; unfortunately, his second one is a 13, which misses. Because he missed the second attack, he does not get to attack the third henchman at all.*

A character cannot spread his Multiple Move By over multiple Segments (*e.g.,* one attack in Segment 12, one in Segment 1, one in Segment 2, and so forth). All attacks are made in the Segment in which the character has a Phase and uses the Maneuver.

MOVE THROUGH

Move Through allows a character to attack at the end of a Full Move by running right into his opponent. This can simulate a ramming attack, a tackle, or many similar actions. Move Through is a Maneuver in and of itself; a character cannot, for example, do a Move Through with an Offensive Strike. Characters cannot perform Move Throughs with Ranged attacks.

A character can perform a Move Through as a Half Phase Action — for example, after using Find Weakness on the target. That means he can only make a Half Move toward his target, but in most cases that's enough to accelerate to full velocity using the movement rules, so it won't change the calculation of CVs or damage/effect. However, it's also possible to perform a Move Through as a Full Phase Action — at the end of a Full Move. In fact, that's how it's most often used.

Characters may not perform Move Throughs with Extra-Dimensional Movement, FTL Travel, Teleportation, any MegaScaled form of movement, or Telekinesis. However, they may perform them at Noncombat Movement speeds with other forms of movement (though this means the character has a base OCV of 0; see pages 24-25). Characters cannot perform "Multiple Move Throughs"; see page 82 regarding Sweep Move Throughs.

USING MOVE THROUGH

To perform a Move Through, the attacker must make an Attack Roll against his target, modified for his velocity. If the attacker misses his target and has inches of movement remaining in his Full Move, he keeps traveling in a straight line through the hex the target was standing in (and may collide with some object in the vicinity, such as a wall or a tree, and hurt himself; he has no chance to hit other targets he would want to hit). He may decelerate if he wishes. If he does not have inches of movement remaining in his Full Move, he ends his Full Move in the target's hex. A character must be able to move at least 1" to perform a Move Through, but doesn't necessarily have to travel his Full Move to get the damage for his full velocity; see *Acceleration, Deceleration, And Gravity,* page 25. However, in most cases a character should make a Full Move when performing a Move Through, unless he can articulate a good reason for the GM why he wouldn't.

If the character hits his target, he does his regular STR damage + (velocity/3)d6 in Normal Damage (it's not limited to double the amount of STR dice the character has). The target takes full damage, and the character performing the Move Through takes half of the STUN and BODY damage done to the target. He cannot avoid this damage by taking *Personal Immunity* on his STR or Movement Power, but his appropriate defenses apply against it. If the attack did no Knockdown or Knockback, then the attacker takes the *full* damage instead (it's like running into a wall — and yes, it's possible for a character to Stun himself or Knock himself Out with his own Move Through). If a target Blocks a Move Through, the character making the unsuccessful Move Through attack does not take any damage.

If the attacker hits the target and doesn't do Knockdown or Knockback, or he hits the target at the end of his Full Move, he stops in the target's hex, directly in front of the target. If he hits and does Knockdown or Knockback and has inches of movement remaining in his Full Move, he has several choices. First, he can travel with the target, ending up either in front of the target in the same hex (if he does not choose to decelerate) or in any hex between the point of impact and the hex where the target comes to rest (if he decelerates after hitting the target). Second, he can continue to move up to the remaining inches of movement in his Full Move or the inches of Knockback done to the target, whichever is less. Third, he can remain in the hex where he hit the target.

Example: *Starburst does a Move Through on Ogre. Starburst does 3d6 for STR, and 15/3 = 5d6 for velocity, for a total of 8d6. Starburst rolls the damage, getting 23 STUN, 8 BODY. Ogre takes full damage — 23 STUN, 8 BODY — and Starburst takes half the damage — 11 STUN, 4 BODY (he can apply his PD to reduce it, of course). If he rolls no Knockback, he takes full damage (23 STUN, 8 BODY), just like Ogre.*

If a character performs a Move Through on a target, the situation may arise in which the Knockback roll indicates the attack would do Knockback, but the target can't take Knockback (perhaps because he's standing against a wall, or the like). In that case, the character takes only half damage from his own Move Through — he "did" Knockback, even if the target didn't actually move. However, in the interest of common sense and dramatic sense, the GM may, if he wishes, rule that this was the equivalent of "no Knockback" and apply full damage.

TYPES OF ATTACKS ALLOWED

Generally, a character can only use his STR, most types of weapons, or some forms of Killing Attack (like claws) when performing a Move Through (see below). He can't use special abilities representing HTH Combat attacks, such as a Rapid-Fire Punch (Energy Blast, Autofire, No Range), unless the GM is willing to analogize the attack to a weapon. The GM may rule that some weapons — such as clubs or maces — can't be used as part of a Move Through.

In most cases, a character may add his Hand-To-Hand Attack (HA) damage when performing a Move Through, *provided* the GM believes that makes sense based on the special effects of the HA and the Combat Maneuver. For example, if the HA is defined as super-hard fists, adding it to a Move Through would probably make sense in most cases — but if it were a club, that might not make any sense at all. In some cases, a character might buy HA with a Limitation indicating that it *only* works with Move Through (for example, see *Comin' Through* on page 54 of *The Ultimate Brick*). The HA

dice are part of the overall damage, and thus affect the damage the character himself takes from performing the maneuver.

At the GM's option, a character can Grab a victim, then perform a Move Through on him by carrying him and running into a large object like a wall, vehicle, or hillside. In this case, the character suffers the penalties for both maneuvers. The GM may limit the damage done to the DEF + BODY of the object the character collides with, if appropriate.

Generally, characters may not add growth momentum damage to a Move Through. However, the GM may allow this if the character can somehow position himself so that the target is "above" him (as might be possible with Flight or Gliding, but not with ground-based Movement Powers or Swinging).

Weapons And Killing Attacks

If a Move Through is performed with a weapon or Killing Attack, divide the character's STR by 2 for purposes of calculating extra damage or DC/OCV penalties based on the weapon's STR Minimum. The weapon, not the character, takes the half (or full) damage from the Move Through; if the BODY damage done to the target exceeds three times (3x) the weapon's base Damage Classes, the weapon breaks. If a character makes a Move Through with a natural Killing Attack (say, his claws), the damage he takes is an equivalent DC of Normal Damage, not Killing Damage. Characters cannot use other innate attacks (such as a "Shock Touch" [No Range Energy Blast]) with Move Through without the GM's permission; if the GM grants permission, he determines the Maneuver's effect (if any) on the attack.

COLLISIONS

Sometimes two characters deliberately run into each other. Resolve this as if each had simultaneously performed a Move Through on the other. Since they *want* to hit each other, you can probably dispense with the Attack Roll altogether and simply assume they collide as planned, but if you want them to make Attack Rolls, each character's CV modifiers are based on his own velocity alone. However, the damage each of them take is based on their *combined* velocity — in other words, each character does his own STR damage + ((his velocity plus target's velocity)/3)d6 of damage to the other character, and takes half that much damage, with his own Move Through. Each character takes the half/full damage from his own Move Through, plus the full damage caused by his opponent's Move Through, separately — he applies defenses to each of them individually, and they don't add together for purposes of determining whether he's Stunned or the like.

Example: *Ramrod has STR 40 and Running 30". Tank has STR 60 and Running 15". They deliberately run into each other at full speed to determine who's tougher. Ramrod does 23d6 damage ((STR/5=8) + ((30 + 15)/3=15) to Tank, and takes half that himself (or all of that, if Tank takes no Knockback). Tank does 27d6 damage ((STR/5=12) + ((30 + 15)/3=15) to Ramrod, and takes half that himself (or all of that, if Ramrod takes no Knockback).*

If a character collides with a large object, typically he takes his velocity/3 in dice of Normal Damage, but limited to a number of dice equal to the DEF+BODY of the object impacted. The GM may alter this in the interest of game balance, common sense, and dramatic sense.

SET

This Combat Maneuver represents the effects of taking extra time to aim at a target with a Ranged attack, thereby improving one's accuracy. Set does not work with HTH Combat attacks.

An attacker who wants to Set must spend a Full Phase aiming at the target (this is known in some genres as "drawing a bead"). During this time he cannot move, change clips of ammunition, attack the target, or perform any Actions other than Zero Phase Actions. A character who has Set on a target receives a +1 OCV to all attacks against that target until he loses his Set. A character must Set on a specific target (either an individual or an object); he can't just Set until a target presents itself.

A character who has Set can attack on a Phase, then continue aiming at his target for several Phases, and then attack again, all without losing his Set bonus. However, the character loses the Set bonus if he doesn't attack or aim at the target, or is forced to stop aiming at the target for any reason (for example, he becomes Stunned or Knocked Out). He also loses the Set bonus if the target moves out of sight. Of course, a character can regain his Set bonus by spending another Phase aiming at the target.

A character can Set and Brace in a single Phase, thereby getting both bonuses. However, the character has to fulfill the requirements for both Modifiers — he must take a Full Phase and be ½ DCV.

STRIKE

This is the basic attack Maneuver. It includes attacks such as punches, kicks, elbow smashes, headbutts, attacks with weapons, firing a gun or a longbow, and just about any other way a character can hit another character. The basic OCV, DCV, and damage modifiers are 0, but the OCV modifier and the damage may vary by weapon type.

A Strike performed with a fist (or foot, elbow, or knee, for that matter) does a maximum of the character's STR/5 in d6 of Normal Damage (1d6 for every 5 STR). For example, a STR 20 person could do up to 4d6 Normal Damage with a Strike. The GM may award a particularly creative Strike with a Surprise Move bonus. For instance, a sudden headbutt or back kick may be worth an OCV bonus.

OTHER ATTACKS

Characters use this Maneuver when making any other attack not listed, including using Attack Powers such as Drain, Energy Blast, Entangle, Flash, a multiple-power attack, or other Powers that require an Attack Roll. To attack, the character should just make a normal Attack Roll, modified by any particular modifiers for the Power, Skill Levels used, or applicable Combat Modifiers.

OPTIONAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

These maneuvers add more flavor to combat, but require more work by the GM. Gamemasters who are just learning the *HERO System,* running for large numbers of players, or want to speed play shouldn't use them unless everyone in the game is comfortable with them.

BLAZING AWAY

A character may use this Combat Maneuver to "blaze away" with a Ranged attack, firing as often as he can (up to the maximum amount of END or Charges he has available). It's most appropriate for Heroic campaigns, but can be used in Superheroic games as well.

When Blazing Away, the character makes one Attack Roll for each attack fired, but he hits his target only if he rolls a 3 (he cannot improve this number with Combat Skill Levels, Combat Modifiers, or any other method). He must expend END or Charges for each attack. He may use an Autofire attack to Blaze Away, but still hits only if a 3 is rolled, and can only hit with one attack out of each "burst" fired. The GM may want to restrict an attacker using Blazing Away to 4-5 shots to reduce the amount of die rolling involved.

Blazing Away counts as an "extremely violent action" for purposes of making a Presence Attack.

Example: *Firefight notices a large group of thugs rushing up to see what happened to their boss (whom he just shot with his pistol). He runs forward (a Half Move) and Blazes Away over their heads with 5 shots. He realizes he has little chance of hitting them, but hopes to make a Presence Attack to scare them away, using his extremely violent action to get a bonus.*

When Blazing Away, a character must specify in advance how many shots he wishes to make. He's not allowed to make them one-by-one, seeing if each one hits before deciding whether to launch additional shots.

Using an Area Of Effect attack, Explosion, or the like doesn't change the effects of Blazing Away — a character can still only hurt the target if he rolls a 3 on his Attack Roll. The missed area-affecting attacks can't harm his enemy.

Usually a character cannot use an attack with the *Extra Time* Limitation to Blaze Away. However, the GM should consider the nature of the Limitation and the special effects involved. For example, if the Limitation only applies to activating the power the first time, but not thereafter, a character might be able to Blaze Away with it after it's been activated.

At the GM's option, characters can Blaze Away with HTH attacks by making a series of wild, violent punches, kicks, slashes, or the like.

CLUB WEAPON

This maneuver allows a character to do Normal Damage with a weapon that ordinarily does Killing Damage. In essence, the character uses the "flat of the blade" or other blunt part of the weapon instead of the edge or point. The weapon does an amount of Damage Classes of Normal Damage equivalent to its Damage Classes of Killing Damage. For example, a great sword (2d6 Killing Damage) would do 6d6 Normal Damage when used with a Club Weapon maneuver.

Club Weapon may not work with all weapons. For example, a club with spikes all over it may not have any blunt surfaces, so a character couldn't use it to perform this Maneuver. Whether a character can perform Club Weapon with a given weapon is up to the GM.

USING RANGED WEAPONS

While Club Weapon is most applicable to melee weapons such as swords and axes, at the GM's discretion characters can use it with some Ranged weapons. For example, a character could use the haft of a throwing spear or the butt of a rifle to perform a Club Weapon attack. In this case, the GM may wish to assign a specific amount of damage to the "club," rather than convert the DCs directly.

For example, many firearms have high Damage Classes due to exotic ammunition or other factors that don't involve the size/shape/weight of the gun itself. Therefore they should do Club Weapon damage based on the type of firearm, rather than the DCs: a handgun does +1d6 Normal Damage; a submachine gun or carbine +2d6 Normal Damage; and a rifle, shotgun, or assault rifle +3d6 Normal Damage. This damage adds to the character's Normal Damage from STR, as if it were a Hand-To-Hand Attack.

COVER

This Maneuver allows the character to aim an attack successfully at an opponent, but not fire right away. It's used to simulate the common situation of holding someone at gunpoint, bowpoint, or swordpoint. Covered is usually limited to Ranged attacks, but in some circumstances characters can use HTH attacks to Cover a target. For example, a thief can Cover a victim by holding a dagger against the victim's throat.

USING COVER

To Cover an opponent, the character must declare his intention and then make an Attack Roll. He makes this roll at a -2 OCV penalty in addition to any other modifiers (such as the Hit Location penalty, if he aims at a specific Hit Location). If the attacker makes the roll, the target is Covered. The attacker does no damage then, but at any time thereafter, he may automatically do damage to the target — no additional Attack Roll is required, and doing the damage takes no time.

Example: *Defender shouts "Freeze!" at Lazer and tries to cover him. Defender has a 7 OCV and Lazer has an 8 DCV. Lazer is standing 5" from Defender, so Defender's must roll 11 + 7 - 8 - 1 (for Range) - 2 (for the Maneuver) = 7 or less to hit. He rolls a 6, and successfully Covers Lazer. If Lazer doesn't surrender, Defender can automatically do damage to him.*

ESCAPING FROM COVER

A character can escape from being Covered. To do this, the Covered character must wait for (or arrange) a distraction. For example, any Presence Attack that equals the Covering character's PRE does the trick, but the defender is at -3d6 for any Presence Attack he makes (after all, he's at a big disadvantage). If the attacker is distracted, the two characters must make a DEX Roll Versus DEX Roll Contest (target first). If the attacker wins, the target remains Covered. If the target wins, he's no longer Covered.

In some genres, such as martial arts campaigns, GMs may want characters to be able to escape from being Covered more easily. In this case, success in a Skill Versus Skill Contest (pitting the Covered character's Fast Draw, Sleight Of Hand, or DEX Roll against the attacker's PER Roll (with a Targeting Sense) or DEX Roll) allows a Covered character to escape.

DIVE FOR COVER

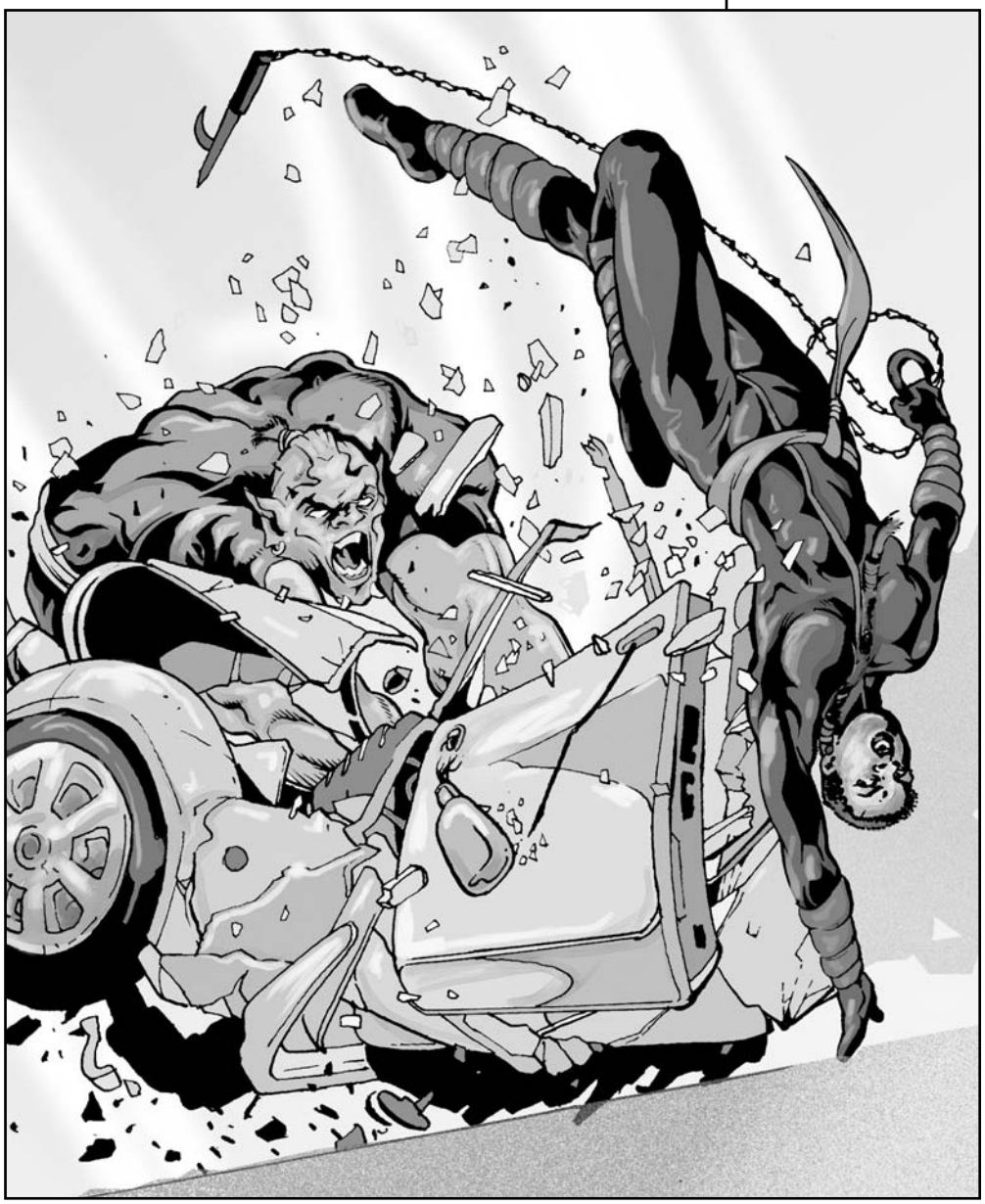
This Maneuver allows a character to get out of the way of explosions, Area Of Effect attacks, being englobed in a Force Wall, and other attacks that cover a large area.

Using Dive For Cover

To use Dive For Cover, the character chooses a hex to move to, then makes a DEX Roll with a penalty of -1 for every 1" of distance moved. A character can only Dive For Cover up to half his maximum movement with the mode of movement used in the Maneuver.

If the DEX Roll succeeds, the character is in the designated hex when the attack goes off. He's considered to be prone (and thus at half DCV) until the next Phase in which he can act.

If the DEX Roll fails, the character is considered to be in the air in his starting hex. This means



DECLARING A DIVE FOR COVER

In most situations, a character must declare his Dive For Cover before his attacker makes an Attack Roll or announces what type of attack he's using — when the weapon's pointed at him but not yet fired, so to speak. Otherwise, problems may arise if a character declares some other defensive Action (primarily a Dodge or Block), then tries to switch to a Dive For Cover when he discovers his attacker's using an area-affecting attack. While some area-affecting attacks (such as grenades, flamethrowers, or area-affecting attacks previously encountered) are obvious (and thus alert the character to Dive For Cover instead of Dodging or Blocking), others are not. The existence of the *Dive For Cover* Maneuver doesn't grant characters prescient knowledge of the types of attacks used against them.

he hasn't automatically avoided the attack, and if it hits him, the GM rolls 1d6 less for calculating Knockback (if the campaign uses the Knockback rules). It doesn't change his DCV or when he next acts (though if he Aborted to Dive For Cover, that obviously factors in). The "in the air" penalties and consequences apply until the character's next Phase. (Of course, he doesn't literally remain "in midair" the entire time — all this means is that the penalties and consequences of failing the Dive For Cover roll remain in effect until his next Phase.) At that point, he "lands" and is "prone"; he must spend a Half Phase to "get up." If he was hit while in midair, that may affect the situation by causing Knockback, Stunning him, or the like, and the GM should deal with that situation normally. If the attack has no significant effect on the character other than the loss of some STUN and/or BODY, he still "lands" in his next Phase as described above.

Dive For Cover is an Attack Action. A character Diving for Cover may not perform any other Maneuver (like Dodge or Block). A character can Abort to Dive For Cover.

Some attacks, such as Sweep or a Multiple Move By, involve a sequence of attacks directed at the target in which if one of the attacks misses, all subsequent attacks automatically miss. For these purposes, a successful use of Dive For Cover counts as a "miss" and ends the sequence of attacks.

A character cannot use Breakfall or Acrobatics to avoid the DCV penalty for Dive For Cover, or to avoid being prone after a Dive For Cover (though when he's allowed to stand up from being prone, he can use Breakfall to accomplish that as a Zero Phase Action). Nor may he use either Skill as a "Complementary Roll" for the DEX Roll to Dive For Cover.

A character can Dive For Cover two or more times in a row, provided the special effects and timing allow for that. For example, a character who Dives For Cover and ends up prone, but is attacked in a later Segment before he's had a chance to get to his feet, might not be allowed to Dive For Cover again, since he hasn't had a chance to reorient himself and get into a position that would allow him to move quickly again. But in some campaigns, the GM might let characters who are "prone" Dive For Cover by scrambling, rolling, or crawling out of the way.

LENGTH OF MOVEMENT

A character can only Dive For Cover up to half his maximum movement with the mode of movement used in the Maneuver. Making a Half Move before Diving For Cover doesn't affect how far a character can Dive For Cover with a mode of movement — he's still restricted to only half his maximum movement. For example, if Lt. Barrett has Running 10", and he's already made a Half Move of 3", he can still use Running to Dive For Cover a maximum of 5" (half of 10"). He can choose to Dive less than 5" if he wants to, but the rules don't force him to do so. If a character makes more than a Half Move, that's a Full Move and prevents him from Diving For Cover that Phase.

A character can Dive For Cover using his Noncombat Movement, unless the GM forbids this for reasons of game balance, dramatic sense, or the like. This allows him to Dive for up to half his Noncombat Movement distance. Doing this halves his DCV, making it more likely he'll be hit if the Dive For Cover fails.

TYPE OF MOVEMENT

Although Dive For Cover's name implies that characters use Running (ground movement) or Leaping to perform it, characters can use any type of movement (except Extra-Dimensional Movement, FTL Travel, or any form of MegaScaled movement) to Dive For Cover. The mode of movement used does not affect the need to make a DEX Roll, or modify the roll in any way.

Regardless of what form of movement a character uses to Dive For Cover, he's considered "prone" at the end of the Maneuver. He may still be standing, but due to disorientation and other factors suffers the usual penalties for being "prone." He must spend a Half Phase to get to his feet (or get his bearings) and is at ½ DCV until he does so.

If a character uses Leaping to Dive For Cover, the *Accurate* Adder has no enhanced effect (for example, it doesn't remove the need to make a DEX Roll, or add a bonus to the DEX Roll). Similarly, the *Position Shift* Adder provides no extra benefits.

PROTECTING OTHER CHARACTERS

A character can also use Dive For Cover to protect another character from an attack. He must Dive For Cover to a point between the attacker and the victim. He attempts the Dive For Cover roll normally. If he succeeds, he takes the damage from the attack — the attacker does not have to make an Attack Roll, he just rolls the damage, which applies normally to the character who Dove For Cover to "interpose" himself. If the Dive For Cover roll fails, the attacker must make his Attack Roll as normal to hit his intended target.

SKILL LEVELS

A character cannot apply any type of Combat Skill Levels to the DEX Roll he makes when Diving For Cover, since CSLs only affect CV. Nor can a character buy 2-point Combat Skill Levels with Dive For Cover, since that type of Level only affects OCV. However, he can use applicable 3-point and more expensive CSLs to increase his DCV while Diving For Cover, if appropriate.

If a character has Skill Levels that can apply to DEX Rolls, he may use those to improve his DEX Roll when Diving For Cover, provided he has not already allocated them in the Segment when he uses the Maneuver. Typically this does *not* include Skill Levels with all Agility Skills or all noncombat Skills, since a DEX Roll is a Characteristic Roll, not a Skill Roll. The GM can, at his option, treat the DEX Roll as an "Agility Skill" roll, thus allowing 5-point Agility Skill Levels or 8-point All Non-Combat Skills Levels to apply, but this is not recommended.

Non-Area Attacks

Dive For Cover is most useful for avoiding attacks that cover a large area, such as Explosions and Area Of Effect attacks. However, characters can use it to avoid regular (non-area-affecting) attacks as well. For example, a character who desperately wants to avoid being chopped in two by an axe-wielding Denebian autochthon could Dive For Cover to get away from his attacker. If a character successfully Dives For Cover this way, the non-area attack automatically misses; if the Dive For Cover roll fails, the attacker makes his Attack Roll at +2 OCV.

When a character Dives For Cover to avoid a non-area attack, he's not required to literally dive behind cover, move beyond the range of the attack, or the like — all he has to do is travel far enough to get away from the effect of the attack. In many cases, moving 1" out of the way does the trick; in other cases, he may have to move further. The GM may, of course, establish a minimum distance based on the nature of the attack, or specify that the character has to Dive in a particular direction. For example, a character trying to Dive For Cover to avoid an attack by a spear-wielding opponent should have to Dive at least the length of the spear; Diving just 1" to the side might not remove a character from the arc of a swung greatsword. In any event, a clever opponent may try to take advantage of the character's ½ DCV if he simply dives a mere 1" away.

For Ranged non-area attacks — such as most Energy Blasts — the nature of the attack and the environment may restrict the character's ability to Dive For Cover. For example, if an attacker fires an Energy Blast at a character from straight in front of him, and the only direction the character can Dive is straight back, the Dive For Cover may not help him — he might still be in the Energy Blast's path. In that case, the GM might rule that the character has to be able to Dive at least 1" to the side to use the Maneuver with any chance of success. Or the GM might rule that, based on the nature of the Energy Blast, the character could Dive For Cover straight back and "hit the dirt," allowing the Energy Blast to pass over him harmlessly. As always, common sense, dramatic sense, special effects, and the GM's discretion should apply.

HIPSHOT

This Maneuver is intended for those situations where a character just *has* to get off the first shot. To use it, a character sacrifices 1 point of OCV to get +1 DEX for this Phase *only* for the purpose of going first in the Phase. A character may not sacrifice more than one point of OCV this way. The character's DCV and DEX-based Skill Rolls are not affected by making a Hipshot.

The player who wants his character to take a Hipshot must declare this at the beginning of the Segment in which he has a Phase so the GM can keep the combat in order. If two characters with the same DEX both declare a Hipshot, the GM should randomly determine who gets the first shot off.

Despite this maneuver's name, characters can use it with HTH attacks as well as Ranged attacks. Characters may use Hipshot with other Combat or Martial Maneuvers (though in most cases they simply use it with Strike).

Example: *The Sandman and Crossbow both have the same DEX, 26. The GM and the player have randomly determined who acted first each Phase. As a result, The Sandman has taken a couple of bad wounds, and he can't last much longer. He tells the GM he'll use Hipshot, so he sacrifices 1 point of OCV to get a DEX of 27 for purposes of going first. This gives him a guaranteed chance to strike first this Phase (unless Crossbow also uses a Hipshot, in which case they'll use the random determination method to see who goes first).*

HURRY

This maneuver, which is similar to Hipshot, provides a character with a way to raise his DEX for purposes of going first in a Phase, but at the expense of rushing his attack (and thus having a worse chance to hit). Characters may use Hurry with other Combat or Martial Maneuvers (though in most cases they simply use it with Strike).

To use Hurry, a character declares at the beginning of a Segment in which he has a Phase that he will Hurry his next Action. He rolls 1d6 and adds the result to his DEX only for purposes of acting earlier in the Phase. When the DEX count gets to his effective DEX, he acts.

Normally, a character should declare he's Hurrying at the beginning of a Segment in which he has a Phase. If the character waits to declare that he'll Hurry until after the DEX count has begun, and his effective DEX while Hurrying would exceed the DEX of characters who have already acted, the Hurrying character does not retroactively get to act before they did — Actions already taken are taken, and the character simply gets to act right away.

While Hurrying, the character is at -2 CV and -2 on all Skill and Characteristic Rolls. DEX gained from Hurrying does not add to CV, Figured Characteristics, Skill Rolls, or Characteristic Rolls.

Example: *Firefight (DEX 20) declares at the beginning of the Phase that he will Hurry. He rolls 1d6 and get a 5. His effective DEX for taking an Action is now a 25. When the DEX count reaches 25, he can act, but will be at -2 on his CV and Skill and Characteristic Rolls.*

Suppose Firefight declares after the GM has begun the DEX count that he will Hurry. He rolls 1d6 and get a 5. His effective DEX for taking an Action is now a 25. However, the GM has already counted down past DEX 24 and 23, and characters with those DEXs have acted. Firefight does not get to act before those characters, but he may now act. He is at -2 on his CV and Skill and Characteristic Rolls.

Generally, a character should only attempt relatively simple actions while Hurrying. Many normally automatic actions become difficult if a character Hurries. The GM should feel free to require DEX Rolls, Skill Rolls, or any other appropriate roll to determine if a character can properly perform an Action while Hurrying (or, alternately, impose a penalty on the action attempted).

PULLING A PUNCH

This Maneuver allows an attacker to Knock Out his opponent without permanently injuring him.

To Pull a Punch, an attacker takes a -1 OCV penalty for every 5d6 (or 5 DCs) in the attack. If the Attack Roll succeeds, the punch (or other HTH attack) does half the BODY it would normally do, and Knockdown and Knockback are calculated from this BODY. However, if the attacker makes his Attack Roll exactly, he does full damage to his target.

Example: *Orion wants to incapacitate a gang member without hurting him. He does a 9d6 punch, and declares he's Pulling his Punch. He's -2 OCV for the attack, giving him a final OCV of 4, the same as the gang member's DCV. Orion must roll an 11- to hit; if he rolls an 11 exactly the kid takes full damage (and probably has to go to the hospital).*

At the GM's option, characters can automatically Pull their punches without any OCV penalty. This is a good way to simulate four-color comic book combat and other campaigns where the characters are supposed to be larger-than-life good guys — penalizing such characters for trying to do the "right thing" by not severely injuring their opponents is usually unfair.

A character can Pull A Punch with a Ranged attack with the GM's permission. Characters may use Pulling A Punch with other Combat or Martial Maneuvers (though in most cases they simply use it with Strike).

REDUCING KNOCKBACK

At the GM's option, a character can Pull A Punch not to reduce damage, but to reduce the amount of Knockback an attack might do. For every 2" of Knockback (or fraction thereof) the character wishes to remove, he suffers a -1 OCV penalty. If the attack hits and does Knockback, reduce the Knockback distance traveled and damage suffered by the indicated amount.

Alternately, the GM can make things even easier and safer: the character takes a -2 penalty to his OCV, and if his attack hits, it does no Knockback at all.

RAPID FIRE

This Maneuver allows a character to fire a Ranged attack more than once in a Phase, either at a single target or at multiple targets. Rapid Fire works with any Ranged attack, including Mental Powers, unless the GM rules otherwise.

Rapid Fire requires a Full Phase and reduces the character to ½ DCV. He also suffers a cumulative -2 OCV penalty for each shot after the first. (For example, if a character wants to Rapid Fire four targets, that's a total -6 penalty, and that -6 applies to all four rolls.) If he misses any of his Attack Rolls, all remaining shots in that sequence automatically miss also. He must expend END or Charges for each shot taken. He may elect to stop his attack after any successful "shot," but this does not retroactively diminish the OCV and DCV penalties for using the Maneuver.

There is no penalty for using Rapid Fire to attack multiple targets or for tracking the attack across hexes. However, all targets must be within the character's front 180-degree line of sight. With the GM's permission, a character can use Rapid Fire to fire two different Ranged weapons or attacks (typically one in each hand), the same way he can perform a Sweep with multiple Combat Maneuvers.

A character cannot spread his Rapid Fire over multiple Segments (*e.g.,* one shot in Segment 12, one in Segment 1, one in Segment 2, and so forth). All shots are fired in the Segment in which the character has a Phase and uses the Maneuver.

In campaigns that use Knockback, when the character uses Rapid Fire to hit a single target multiple times, determine the Knockback separately for each Rapid Fire shot that hits the target. The target takes the highest amount of Knockback rolled. For example, if a character hits a target twice with a Rapid Fired Energy Blast, and one hit does 6" Knockback and the other 3" Knockback, the target takes 6" Knockback.

If a character uses Rapid Fire with Combat Maneuvers or other forms of attack that modify OCV and/or DCV, Maneuver bonuses to OCV are not cumulative (each applies only to the attack it's used with), and if DCV bonuses are involved (including a +0 "bonus"), only the lowest bonus applies. However, all OCV and DCV penalties are *cumulative* (they apply to *all* attacks made with that Rapid Fire). DCV penalties from maneuvers should be subtracted from the character's DCV before his DCV is halved for using Rapid Fire. Maneuvers or Skills that halve the character's DCV aren't cumulative with the halving effect from Rapid Fire (the character's DCV is only reduced by half). Characters cannot combine Rapid Fire with Haymaker.

The GM may wish to restrict characters using Rapid Fire to a maximum of 2-3 shots per Phase,

COMMON RAPID FIRE/SWEEP RULES

Several rules apply to both Rapid Fire and Sweep.

Combat Skill Levels
A character could buy 2-point CSLs just to improve his OCV with Rapid Fire or Sweep, regardless of what type of weapon or attack he Rapid Fires with. If he buys 3-point CSLs with Rapid Fire (or more expensive CSLs that could apply to Rapid Fire/Sweep), he can use them to increase his OCV and/or DCV with Rapid Fire/Sweep (but note the DCV Checklist on page 36, which in effect halves any Levels applied to DCV).

If a character has 2-point (or more expensive) Combat Skill Levels with an attack, can he apply those Levels to his OCV when Rapid Firing/Sweeping with that attack.

If a character uses a Combat Skill Level to increase the damage done by, or his OCV with, a Rapid Fire/Sweep attack, the CSL applies to every "shot" that hits the target. He doesn't have to divide his CSLs among the shots. As always, the GM may change this rule if he finds it unbalancing.

Combat Value
For Rapid Fire and Sweep, the attacker determines his OCV at the beginning of the sequence, based on the OCV modifiers from Rapid Fire/Sweep itself and other factors. That OCV should remain unchanged throughout the sequence of shots, unless the GM deems it appropriate to alter the attacker's OCV for some reason. If the attacks are made against a single target, the target's DCV remains the same throughout the sequence in most situations. However, if the circumstances of the attack change his DCV in some way (for example, if one attack frees him from an Entangle or Knocks him Out), then his DCV changes for all shots thereafter. The GM may choose to ignore this rule, and maintain the DCV the target had at the start of the sequence, if he prefers to run the attack in a simpler fashion.

If the attacks are made against multiple targets, with each being attacked once, each has its own DCV, determined by the conditions at the time the sequence began. If some targets are attacked more than once, the rules stated above apply.

A character using a Rapid Fire or Sweep may elect to stop his attack after any successful "shot." However, he cannot, by doing so, retroactively diminish the OCV and DCV penalties for using the Maneuver.

If a character uses Rapid Fire or Sweep with another Combat/Martial Maneuver, and that Combat/Martial Maneuver imposes an OCV penalty, the Maneuver's OCV penalty does *not* accumulate the way the penalty for Rapid Fire/Sweep does. For example, if a character uses a Sweep Offensive Strike (-2 OCV) to hit three foes, his OCV penalty is -6 (one -2 for using Offensive Strike, plus an additional cumulative -2 for Sweeping each target after the first).

DCV Of Target
With Rapid Fire and Sweep, if the character misses with one attack, all subsequent attacks that are part of the maneuver automatically fail. If the targets have different DCVs, the attacker chooses in what order to make the attacks, but the GM can override this choice if necessary. In many cases the circumstances will suggest a logical or common-sense order in which the rolls should occur, and the GM should make sure that neither PC nor NPC attempts to get around that order just to obtain a rules benefit.

Extra Time
If an attack has the *Extra Time* Limitation, usually that means a character cannot use it to Rapid Fire or Sweep. However, the GM should consider the nature of the Limitation and the special effects involved. If the Limitation only applies to activating the power the first time, but not thereafter, a character might be able to Rapid Fire/Sweep with it after it's been activated.

Multiple-Power Attacks
As a default rule, characters cannot Rapid Fire or Sweep with a multiple-power attack; that's too likely to cause game balance problems or slow down play. But the GM can allow this if he thinks it's appropriate and fair.

Power Frameworks
A character use one or more slots in a Power Framework as the attack(s) for a Rapid Fire or Sweep, against either a single target or multiple targets, if any of the following apply: it's the only power in the Framework used in the attack; the Framework is a Multipower or Variable Power Pool with enough reserve/pool points to allocate to two or more slots used in the attack simultaneously; the Framework is an EC with two or more Attack Powers. Of course, the GM can forbid this if he feels the proposed attack defies common sense or dramatic sense or would cause game balance problems.

Preparation Time Not Required
Neither Rapid Fire nor Sweep require a Phase to prepare to use them. As long as a character has a Full Phase free, he can use Rapid Fire or Sweep.

which gives a reasonable increase in firepower while still rendering the attacker vulnerable to counterattack.

Example: *Firefight wants to use Rapid Fire on the boss of the terrorist group he's been pursuing. He decides to fire three shots — that ought to be enough to take him down! This takes a Full Phase and reduces his DCV by half. He has a -4 OCV on all three shots.*

Now Firefight wants to use Rapid Fire to shoot one time at each of the boss's three henchmen, who are also firing at him. These three thugs are all in front of him, but are spread out over ten hexes. He suffers the same penalties — ½ DCV, -4 OCV — and does not take a penalty for firing at multiple targets.

A character cannot use Rapid Fire with Autofire attacks unless he knows the *Rapid Autofire* Skill (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 50). Additionally, the GM may rule that characters cannot Rapid Fire some Powers or weapons — such as slings, crossbows, and some spells. If so, those attacks may, at the GM's discretion, take a -½ *Cannot Be Rapid Fired* Limitation.

If a character Rapid Fires with a Mental Power and has a significant chance of being counterattacked with Mental Powers, the GM may substitute ½ DECV for the standard ½ DCV penalty if he wants to. Otherwise, the standard ½ DCV penalty applies.

ROLL WITH A PUNCH

Roll With A Punch allows a character to take less damage from a HTH attack. This Maneuver is unique because a character may perform it *after* he's been struck by an opponent's attack (*i.e.,* after the opponent's Attack Roll succeeds, but before he rolls damage).

To Roll With A Punch, the character must make an Attack Roll against his attacker's OCV (like Block); this roll has a -2 OCV penalty. If successful, the character takes only half the STUN and BODY that the attack would have normally done. (Halve the total after defenses have been applied.) However, the attacker rolls one less die for Knockback (making it more likely the character takes Knockback).

Unless the GM rules otherwise, the effects of Rolling With A Punch apply to any sort of HTH Combat attack — physical punches, a sword, poisoned claws, an energy gauntlet, or the like. However, the Maneuver's most appropriate for attacks that do damage from physical impact (such as an actual punch), and the GM may restrict Rolling With A Punch to such attacks if he feels that makes more sense.

A character may Abort to Roll With A Punch. However, he cannot do so if he's unable to act or Abort to an Action. For example, if he's tried to Dodge or Block the attack and failed, he cannot Roll With A Punch because he's now unable to act or Abort. A character cannot Roll With A Punch after an unsuccessful Block or Dodge, whether he Aborted to the Block or Dodge or not.

This Maneuver is most appropriate for Superheroic campaigns, but is also applicable to Heroic campaigns.

SNAP SHOT

This Maneuver allows a character to move after making an attack (which is normally not allowed) — the character ducks out from Concealment (see page 43), makes an attack, and then ducks back behind cover. It's normally only used with Ranged attacks, but may, with the GM's permission and in the right circumstances, be used in HTH Combat as well. Snap Shot requires a Full Phase, and characters can use it with other Combat Maneuvers (for example, a character could use Rapid Fire while Snap Shooting).

To make a Snap Shot, the character must start fully Concealed near a corner, edge, or opening in whatever he's hiding behind. The opening or edge must be in the same hex as the character. He steps out (on his Phase and DEX) and attacks, using the modifier for Snap Shot (-1 OCV) in addition to whatever other modifiers he might have (for the weapon or maneuver he uses, for example). He gets his full DCV (modified, if necessary, by any other maneuvers he is using) plus a bonus for Concealment.

The character may only fire at targets he's aware of, although he may make a PER Roll to spot previously unknown targets. After this combat action, he's exposed to enemy attack for the rest of the Segment in which he attacked. On the Segment after the Snap Shot he may duck back behind Concealment (at the same DEX at which he made his Snap Shot).

SUPPRESSION FIRE

Characters may only use this Maneuver with attacks capable of Autofire. Basically, a character uses this Maneuver to "hose down" an area with bullets, energy bolts, or what have you so that anyone coming into that area is automatically attacked. Suppression Fire simulates the classic "Cover me!" situation in movies, where one character sprays a hail of bullets at the enemy to give another character a chance to move without being fired at.

USING SUPPRESSION FIRE

To use Suppression Fire, the character defines a hex line or group of hex lines that he's firing through. Find his OCV to hit that hex line or lines, taking into account the normal modifiers for using Autofire against a group of hexes (each hex line counts as one hex for this purpose). In addition, he suffers a -2 OCV penalty for performing Suppression Fire.

Suppression Fire takes a Half Phase and is an Attack Action. The character must fire into the defined area the maximum number of shots he can fire with the Autofire power/weapon being used, unless the GM rules otherwise. The shots aren't equally divided into all the hex lines; they're considered to be fired into the defined area as a whole. Since Suppression Fire can last until the character's next Phase, the character fires that many shots *each Segment,* not just in Segments when he has a Phase. He must use the same number of attacks in every Segment in which he uses Suppression Fire. He must expend END or Charges for each shot made. (If he's using an attack that costs END instead of Charges, the character should declare how many "shots" he's firing, with a minimum of one per hex line.)

Anyone (or anything) who enters the area covered by Suppression Fire is automatically attacked once for each hex line he moves through. There's no way to "sneak" through a hex line, move through a hex line on a Segment in which the attacker does not have a Phase, or run through a hex line without getting attacked. Several targets may take damage, even if they enter the area on different Segments. The attacker must roll to hit; he makes one Attack Roll per hex line the target moves through. The attacker's OCV is determined by the number of hex lines being fired into, plus the -2 OCV Maneuver penalty. The target's DCV is normal, and each target can only be hit once per hex line per Segment.

The maximum number of hits a character can obtain with Suppression Fire in a Segment equals the number of shots fired in that Segment. Once he rolls that many successful Attack Rolls against targets moving through the affected area, by defini-

tion he cannot hit any more targets. A character using Suppression Fire cannot decline to make an Attack Roll against a target in the area — in each Segment, he must make one roll per hex line every target moves through until he has used up all his hits for that Segment. However, if two targets enter the "Suppression Fire zone" at the same time, the character can choose which one to make his Attack Rolls against first. If any issues of timing arise, the GM determines which targets the character can (or must) attack first.

A character cannot "overlap" his Suppression Fire so he can attack a target more than once per hex line. Autofire Skills have no effect on Suppression Fire.

Pinning Targets Down

To be hit by Suppression Fire, a target has to move into, out of, or through the "Suppression Fire zone," or take some other Action that indicates movement (such as attacking the character who's using Suppression Fire, or most other targets). If he doesn't move in any way, the fire has him "pinned down" — which is often the point of the maneuver anyway. The GM determines what Actions, if any, a "pinned down" target can take without exposing himself to the Suppression Fire.

Going Beyond Hex Lines

Not every area a character wants to cover with Suppression Fire neatly divides into hex lines. If the GM can't count some reasonable approximation of hex lines, he should define the number of "hex lines" in the area affected and use that modifier. Such "hex lines" for Suppression Fire must be adjacent to each other as much as reasonably possible.

SWEEP

This Maneuver allows a character to use a HTH attack more than once in a Phase against a single target or multiple targets (provided they're all within HTH range). Characters may use Sweep with most Combat Maneuvers, not just a Strike (see below). Sweep is usually performed with some sort of (large) hand-to-hand weapon such as a greatsword, but it may be done barehanded.

Sweep requires a Full Phase and reduces the character to ½ DCV. He also suffers a cumulative -2 OCV penalty for each attack after the first. (For example, if a character wants to Sweep four targets, that's a total -6 penalty, and that -6 applies to all four rolls.) If he misses any of his Attack Rolls, all remaining attacks in that sequence automatically miss also. He must expend END or Charges for each attack. He may not use Sweep with Autofire

HTH attacks unless he has the *Rapid Autofire* Skill (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 50). He may elect to stop his attack after any successful attack, but this does not retroactively diminish the OCV and DCV penalties for using the Maneuver.

In campaigns that use Knockback, when the character uses Sweep to hit a single target multiple times, determine the Knockback separately for each Sweep attack shot that hits the target. The target takes the highest amount of Knockback rolled. For example, if a character hits a target twice with a Sweeped HA, and one hit does 5" Knockback and the other 4" Knockback, the target takes 5" Knockback.

With the GM's permission, a character can Sweep with more than one Combat Maneuver — for example, Martial Disarming one opponent while punching another. In this case, Maneuver bonuses to OCV are not cumulative (each applies only to the attack it is used with), and if both maneuvers provide DCV bonuses (including a +0 "bonus"), only the lowest bonus applies. However, all OCV and DCV penalties are *cumulative* (they apply to *all* Attack Rolls). DCV penalties from maneuvers should be subtracted from the character's DCV before his DCV is halved for using Sweep. Maneuvers or Skills that halve the character's DCV aren't cumulative with the halving effect from Sweep (the character's DCV is only reduced by half).

A character cannot spread his Sweep over multiple Segments (*e.g.,* one attack in Segment 12, one in Segment 1, one in Segment 2, and so forth). All attacks are made in the Segment in which the character has a Phase and uses the Maneuver.

The GM may wish to restrict characters using Sweep to a maximum of 2-3 attacks per Phase, which gives a reasonable increase in attack power while still rendering the attacker vulnerable to counterattack.

Example: *Nighthawk faces four thugs. He knows his fighting skill greatly exceeds theirs, so he decides to punch all four of them. He performs his Punch (Martial Strike) as a Sweep.*

He starts out with a base OCV of 11 (from DEX and CSLs). He's Sweeping four characters, so with the -2 OCV cumulative for each target after the first, he suffers a -6 OCV, making his final OCV 5 versus each foe.

His enemies have DCV 4. He needs a 12 or less to hit. He rolls an 11, an 8, a 12, and a 4. He has hit all four targets.

On his next Phase, he does it again. He rolls a 12, a 9, and a 13. Since his third Punch was a miss, he doesn't even get to roll to hit the fourth target.

Later on, after polishing off the four thugs, Nighthawk encounters their master. Hoping for a quick end to the encounter, he decides to use Sweep to punch the master three times (which will give him a -4 OCV (total OCV of 7) against the master's DCV of 8). He roll 10, 9, and 12. The first two attacks hit, but the third misses. Unfortunately, he's now at ½ DCV against the master's counterattack.

MANEUVERS USABLE WITH SWEEP

Characters may use Sweep with most Combat Maneuvers, not just a Strike. For example, a character could Sweep Disarm several enemies, Sweep Martial Throw, and so forth. However, a character may not Sweep with Haymaker, and can only Sweep maneuvers that use a Full Move (such as Move Through or Passing Strike) if all targets are in adjacent hexes. ("Adjacent" in this sense typically means "all of the targets are in hexes adjacent to the attacker," but not necessarily the same hex, since there are six hexes adjacent to any given hex. However, in the case of Maneuvers like Sweep Move Through, all the targets would have to be in hexes adjacent to one another — in most cases, they'd probably have to be lined up or the like, since there are "realistic" limits to how much an attacker can twist and turn as he moves regardless of whether there's a Turn Mode involved. As always, the GM should adjudicate the situation with game balance, common sense, and dramatic sense in mind.) A character cannot do a Sweep Move By; refer to the description of Move By for information on Multiple Move Bys.

A character may only Sweep Grab as many targets as he has hands/limbs to hold them. The exception is when the character tries to Grab more than one of a single target's limbs, as detailed above under *Grab.* In that situation, a character may attempt to Sweep as many limbs as he wants; this reflects his ability to tangle an enemy up so he can't use his limbs properly.

A character can only perform a Sweeping Choke Hold, Crush, Takeaway, or Bind on as many targets as he has hands/limbs to hold them. Grabbing the heads of two opponents and banging them together constitutes Sweeping a Grab and Crush.

Sweep does not work with maneuvers such as Root and Escape (which are not attacks), Crush or any other attack with the *Follow* Element (the Sweep would have to be performed with the original attack, such as the Grab part of a Crush), and Shove (which a character can already use on several people at once, refer to *Shove,* below).

If a target is holding one weapon in each hand, the character may Sweep Disarm both weapons, counting each weapon as a separate target.

OPTIONAL FANTASY HERO COMBAT MANEUVERS

The following Optional Combat Maneuvers are appropriate for Fantasy campaigns. Gamemasters should review them and decide whether to incorporate them into the game. (See also the *Flail* Maneuver on pages 168-69 of *Fantasy Hero.*)

SET VERSUS CHARGE

This Combat Maneuver (which differs from the Standard Combat Maneuver *Set*) allows a character to use a weapon to resist the effects of a charging foe (such as a knight on horseback, an angry boar, or a berserk ogre rushing at the character to cleave him in two).

To perform a Set Versus Charge, the character needs two things. First, he needs a long, thrusting weapon — typically a spear, glaive, trident, or other polearm. The GM may, at his option, allow characters to Set Versus Charge with other large, long weapons, such as greatswords.

Second, since Set Versus Charge only works against charging opponents, the character needs to be prepared. Typically this means he Holds his Action in anticipation of the charge. Set Versus Charge requires a Full Phase.

A character who declares a Set Versus Charge must state that he is doing so, and which direction he's preparing for a charge from (he doesn't have to indicate the specific target he's setting against, since that really depends on who chooses to charge him — he just has to face the right direction). When the charging attacker comes within range (based on the length of the weapon the character uses), the character makes his Attack Roll. If the character's weapon is longer than the charging attacker's weapon, the character's Attack Roll occurs before his opponent gets to make an attack. If the two have equal-sized weapons, their attacks on each other occur simultaneously. If the charging attacker has a longer weapon, he gets to make his Attack Roll first, and if he succeeds may ruin the character's Set Versus Charge (for example, by Stunning the character).

Set Versus Charge adds +0 OCV, +0 DCV. If the character's Attack Roll succeeds, the charging attacker takes the normal damage for the weapon (including bonuses from the character's STR, Combat Skill Levels, and the like), increased by the charging attacker's velocity — add +1 Damage Class for each full 3" of movement the charging attacker had. The DCs add equally to both Normal and Killing Damage weapons, though as usual they cannot more than double the DCs of damage in the base attack (see page 106).

Typically a Set Versus Charge hits the rider of a mount, not the mount. The character may declare that he's aiming for the mount instead, or the GM may roll randomly to determine whether rider or mount takes the blow.

Example: *Orcs (DEX 15, SPD 3) riding giant wolves (Running 11") attack the village of Timberton. Sir Gareth (STR 15, DEX 18, SPD 4) and his companions defend the hapless hamlet. Sir Gareth has a Medium Spear (a Long weapon); in Segment 3 he decides to Set Versus Charge. The orcs approach from the west, so Sir Gareth faces that way. Since the orcs only have SPD 3, he must Hold his Phase in Segment 3 until they get to him.*

In Segment 4, when the orcs get a Phase, the charge arrives. Sir Gareth is prepared, with his spear-butt planted firmly in the ground (braced by his foot) and the spearhead aimed at an approaching orc. As a Long weapon, the spear has +1" reach, so Sir Gareth gets to attack first. When the orc gets within range of his weapon, Sir Gareth rolls to hit. He has a base OCV 6, and two Combat Skill Levels applied to OCV, giving him an OCV of 8. The orc is DCV 5. Sir Gareth rolls an 11 and hits! The orc runs full into the spear. The spear does a base of 1½d6 Killing Damage (5 DCs), and Sir Gareth adds +1 DC because his STR (15) exceeds the weapon's STR Minimum (10) by 5. Additionally, he adds +1 DC for each full 3" of the orc's movement. The wolf was using Running 11", so Sir Gareth can add +3 DCs (if the wolf had Running 12", Sir Gareth could add +4 DCs). So, the weapon does 5 +1 +3 = 9 DCs of damage, or 3d6 Killing! Sir Gareth rolls 14 BODY and skewers the orc.

SHIELD WALL

Two or three characters with shields can help defend each other by establishing a *shield wall* so their "zones of protection" overlap. To establish a shield wall (which takes a Zero-Phase Action for all persons involved), a character with a shield must stand next to another person with a shield (*i.e.,* they must be in the same hex or adjacent hexes). Both characters must face the same way and agree to participate in the shield wall. If these conditions apply, the character gets +1 DCV. (Of course, so does the other character.) If a character has two people forming a shield wall with him, one on each side, he receives a +2 DCV bonus. Of course, if the character moves out of the shield wall, he loses this bonus.

Characters may only establish a Shield Wall with small, medium, or large shields.

UNHORSE

A character may use this Optional Combat Maneuver to knock a person off a horse (or other mount). To do this, the character must have a Long weapon (typically a spear or other pole arm) or a quarterstaff. The Maneuver is a -1 OCV, +0 DCV attack.

To Unhorse a target, the character makes an Attack Roll. If the roll succeeds, he knocks the target off his horse, doing Normal Damage equal to the attacker's STR divided by 5 (*not* his weapon's damage), +1d6 for every full 5" the mount moved

FANTASY HERO OPTIONAL COMBAT MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Phase	OCV	DCV	Effects
Bind	½	+0	+0	Binds weapon with STR Versus STR Contest
Set Versus Charge	1	+0	+0	Weapon + target's v/3 damage
Shield Wall (1 side)	0	—	+1	
Shield Wall (2 sides)	0	—	+2	
Unhorse	½	-1	+0	Knocks target from saddle, does STR/5 + target's v/5 Normal Damage

in that Segment (or the last Segment in which it moved, if it didn't move that Segment). The target can make a Breakfall roll at -1 per 2d6 damage (if he has that Skill) to take half damage (or no damage if he makes the roll by half).

The Unhorse maneuver assumes the target doesn't expect someone to try to knock him from the saddle. If the GM believes the target is prepared, the attacker suffers an additional -3 OCV with his Unhorse maneuver. Additionally, some types of saddles, such as the aerial mount saddle described above, impose penalties on Unhorse because they hold the rider so firmly in place.

MARTIAL MANEUVERS

Any character can use the basic Combat Maneuvers, but only those who have received special training, or have a particular aptitude for HTH combat, know Martial Arts. Many of these Maneuvers are improved versions of standard Combat Maneuvers; a few provide new abilities.

Martial Arts is a Skill — characters have to purchase Martial Maneuvers at the cost listed in the sidebar on *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 64. Characters must spend a minimum of 10 Character Points on Martial Maneuvers. As noted on page 143, Martial Maneuvers don't cost END. However, unless the GM rules otherwise, a character performing one must still pay the full normal END cost for his STR. This applies even if the maneuver is one that doesn't benefit from adding STR damage or capacity, such as a Nerve Strike.

Martial Arts can represent many things. It most often represents advanced HTH Combat training, whether received from an ancient Chinese master at a hidden temple deep in the Himalayas, an unarmed combat specialist in the military, a skilled practitioner of elven swordfighting, or any of hundreds of other sources. It can also simulate the standard maneuvers taught to warriors who use a particular type of weapon — instead of using the basic Strike maneuver, they use these advanced maneuvers. Martial Arts could even simulate a character who has an innate fighting ability of some sort; this is particularly good for ferocious monsters and beasts, whose skill with their claws and fangs could be represented with a few specific Martial Maneuvers.

When a character uses a Martial Maneuver with a weapon, substitute the weapon's damage for "STR" listed in the Damage/Effects column, and consider any added damage as added Damage Classes, not added d6s. For example, a Martial Strike with a weapon does Weapon +2 DC. See *Adding Damage: Haymaker And Martial Maneuvers,* page 108, for more information.

A character cannot Link two or more Martial Maneuvers together.

Partial Maneuvers

Many maneuvers have more than one element or "aspect," such as Block-Grab or Block-Throw. In most cases it's not necessary for a character to use all aspects of a maneuver — he can use only those aspects he wants to. For example, a Reversal allows a character to Escape a Grab, and then Grab the person who Grabbed him. A character with this maneuver does not have to perform the Grab if he doesn't want to; he can simply Escape, and then end his maneuver at that point. Another good example is the Joint Lock/Throw, which involves Grabbing the target's limb and bending it to force the target to the ground. A character doesn't have to use either the "NND" or the "Throw" aspects of this maneuver if he prefers not to. (Of course, an attack or maneuver which "Must Follow" a particular maneuver or which is a "Response" to a maneuver cannot be used on its own.)

However, sometimes one element acts as a "prerequisite" for another, or the definition of the maneuver dictates that all elements have to be used. For example, with Choke Hold, a character cannot use the "NND" element of this maneuver without first using the "Grab" element. Similarly, most Throw-based maneuvers do their damage in whole or in part by slamming the target to the ground, so not using the Target Falls element makes the maneuver meaningless.

Thus, you have to look at the maneuver from the perspective of special effects, common sense, and dramatic sense. In light of that, the GM could allow a character to use only part of a maneuver if he wanted — but even so, that should be the exception, not the rule. Maneuvers with multiple elements are packaged together specifically because they're *meant* to be used together; a character who doesn't want to do those things together should purchase two maneuvers that each do one of the things the "combo" maneuver does all at once. The GM has the final say regarding whether an element has to be used in a maneuver.

COMMON SENSE AND MARTIAL ARTS

The GM should keep common sense in mind when dealing with Martial Arts damage. In the real world, some martial artists are capable of incredible feats, but that doesn't mean PCs can duplicate those feats effortlessly just because they've spent a few points on Martial Maneuvers. Even though a character can do 9d6 with his Offensive Strike, he shouldn't necessarily be able easily to kick down a wall or the bars of a jail cell. Even if game terms say the wall only has 3 DEF, 3 BODY per hex, or the jail bars are only 6 DEF, 6 BODY, a little dose of common sense tells you that not even trained martial artists can routinely kick down walls or smash jail bars with their bare hands. Regardless of whether it's possible *in game terms* to do it, the GM can, and should, tell players their characters can't do these things, because it would be just plain ridiculous. If it suits the tone of the campaign, let them do it, but in more "realistic" games, feel free to ignore what the rules say and tell the players *No.*

HAND-TO-HAND MARTIAL MANEUVERS

Maneuver	Phase	Cost	OCV	DCV	Effects
Basic Strike	½	3	+1	+0	STR +2d6 Strike
Basic Strike	½	3	+1	+0	STR +2d6 Strike
Charge	½	4	+0	-2	STR +2d6 +v/5 Strike, FMove
Choke Hold	½	4	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND(2)
Counterstrike	½	4	+2	+2	STR +2d6 Strike, Must Follow Block
Crush	½	4	+0	+0	STR +4d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab
Defensive Block	½	5	+1	+3	Block, Abort
Defensive Strike	½	5	+1	+3	STR Strike
Defensive Throw	½	3	+1	+1	Block, Target Falls
Disarming Throw	½	5	+0	+0	Grab Weapon, +5 STR to take weapon away; Target Falls
Fast Strike	½	4	+2	+0	STR +2d6 Strike
Flying Dodge	½	5	—	+4	Dodge All Attacks, Abort; FMove
Flying Grab	½	5	-2	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR for holding on; FMove
Flying Tackle	½	3	+0	-1	STR +v/5 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls; FMove
Grappling Block	½	4	+1	+1	Grab One Limb, Block
Grappling Throw	½	3	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike; Target Falls; Must Follow Grab
Joint Break	½	5	-1	-2	Grab One Limb; HKA ½d6 (2 DC), Disable
Joint Lock/Throw	½	4	+1	+0	Grab One Limb; 1d6 NND(7); Target Falls
Killing Strike	½	4	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (2 DC)
Killing Throw	½	5	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (2 DC); Target Falls
Legsweep	½	3	+2	-1	STR +1d6 Strike; Target Falls
Martial Block	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Martial Disarm	½	4	-1	+1	Disarm; +10 STR to Disarm roll
Martial Dodge	½	4	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
Martial Escape	½	4	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
Martial Flash	½	4	-1	-1	Flash 4d6 (choose Sense Group)
Martial Grab	½	3	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 to STR for holding on
Martial Strike	½	4	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike
Martial Throw	½	3	+0	+1	STR +v/5; Target Falls
Nerve Strike	½	4	-1	+1	2d6 NND(1)
Offensive Strike	½	5	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
Passing Disarm	½	5	-1	-1	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm roll; FMove
Passing Strike	½	5	+1	+0	STR +v/5; FMove
Passing Throw	½	5	+0	+0	STR +v/5; Target Falls; FMove
Reversal	var	4	-1	-2	STR +15 to Escape; Grab Two Limbs
Root	½	4	+0	+0	STR +15 to resist Shove; Block, Abort
Sacrifice Disarm	½	4	+2	-2	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm roll
Sacrifice Lunge	½	4	+2	-2	STR +v/5; FMove
Sacrifice Strike	½	5	+1	-2	STR +4d6 Strike
Sacrifice Throw	½	3	+2	+1	STR Strike; You Fall, Target Falls
Shove	½	4	+0	+0	+15 STR to Shove
Takeaway	½	5	+0	+0	Grab Weapon, +10 STR to take weapon away
Takedown	½	3	+1	+1	STR Strike; Target Falls
Weapon Bind	½	4	+1	+0	Bind, +10 STR
+1 Damage Class	—	—	—		Adds to all Martial Maneuvers
Weapon Element	—	—	—		Allows use of Martial Arts with weapons

EXPLANATION OF TERMS:

Phase: How long it takes to perform the Maneuver (usually either a Half Phase [½] or a Full Phase [1]).

Cost: The Maneuver's cost in Character Points.

OCV (Offensive Combat Value): The Maneuver's modification to OCV. For example, a +1 OCV means a character has +1 to his OCV when making an Attack Roll with the Maneuver.

DCV (Defensive Combat Value): The maneuver's modification to the attacker's DCV. For example, performing a Haymaker decreases the attacker's DCV, making it more likely he'll be hit.

Effects: The damage or other effect done by the Maneuver. STR means the Maneuver does STR/5 in d6 of Normal Damage.

Abort: A character can forfeit his next Phase to perform this Maneuver in a Segment when he doesn't have a Phase. For a more detailed explanation, see *Aborting An Action,* page 21.

Dash ("—"): That column is not relevant to that maneuver.

Many Martial Maneuvers — such as Defensive Strike, Martial Strike, Offensive Strike, Martial Dodge, Martial Block, and Martial Grab — are essentially just "improved" versions of Standard Combat Maneuvers. They either provide an OCV bonus, a DCV bonus, a damage bonus, and/or some other enhanced ability (such as the extra Grabbing STR from a Martial Grab). They function identically to the regular Combat Maneuvers of similar name, but with different modifiers. See the descriptions of the relevant Standard Combat Maneuvers for more information.

CONVERTING MARTIAL MANEUVERS TO STANDARD MANEUVERS

In some campaigns, the GM may wish to make a Martial Maneuver (such as a kick or Bind) a Standard Maneuver. There's nothing wrong with this, if it doesn't unbalance the campaign and the GM keeps two things in mind.

First, there should be some justification in realism or the genre for making a Martial Maneuver Standard. For instance, in *Fantasy Hero* Weapon Bind is a Standard Maneuver, since weapons combat is such a prevalent part of that genre (see below). Another example is campaigns that allow any character to perform some sort of "kick" maneuver, on the grounds that anyone can kick somebody else and do more damage than a punch, it's just not as easy as punching them.

Second, Standard Maneuvers derived from Martial Maneuvers should never be as effective as their martial counterparts, so characters who buy Martial Maneuvers still benefit from doing so. For example, a standard "kick" maneuver should impose CV penalties a standard Strike does not, and should not add as much damage as a comparable martial arts "kick" maneuver. As a good rule of thumb, a Standard Maneuver should cost about 0-1 points when built using the Martial Maneuver construction rules.

Players should also remember that liberal application of special effects can "convert" a Standard Maneuver into a Martial Maneuver. For example, you could define a Grab and Throw as a "footsweep" or "takedown" of some sort.

Bind

To use Bind, a character performs an OCV versus OCV attack as with a Block; a successful hit binds his opponent's weapon, resulting in a temporary deadlock. The attack does no actual damage. Normally, the attacker uses a weapon, and binds the target's by pinning it up against the target's body. However, characters can use this maneuver barehanded, usually by pinning the target's weapon arm against his body, or pinning the target's weapon under the target's own arm after a wild swing.

If the character's Attack Roll succeeds, the target's weapon is momentarily bound; both fighters immediately make STR Rolls. If the target possesses the Escape maneuver or the Bind maneuver, he can use its STR bonus in the STR Versus STR Rolls. If he knows both, he can only use the bonus from one of them. If the attacker wins or the roll is a tie, the Bind stays in effect; if the defender wins, he breaks the Bind and the fight can resume normally.

If the attacker wins another, immediate STR Roll (which takes no time but may only be attempted once per Phase), he may also elect to shove his opponent back 1", maintaining the Bind, as long as there's room for the defender to move backwards; if the attacker fails or merely ties this second STR Roll, he may not do this.

On each of the Bound character's Phases, both characters again roll the STR Versus STR Rolls, as before. This takes the Bound character a Half Phase; resisting an attempt to escape the Bind is an action which takes no time. The Bound character can follow his attempt to escape with an attack or movement. (If the weapon remains Bound, the character cannot use it in an attack.) The defender can also break a Bind automatically by moving 1" backward in one of his Phases.

While the characters remain Bound together, they may still talk, attack with their free hands (if any), and so forth. They are at their normal OCV and DCV against one another, but the Bound character is at ½ DCV against attacks from third parties, while the attacker is at full DCV against attacks from third parties.

BIND IN *FANTASY HERO*

At the GM's option, characters in Fantasy campaigns (and other campaigns, if appropriate) can use a new Standard Combat Maneuver, *Bind*. A Bind allows a character to "lock up" another character's weapon, preventing him from using it but not actually disarming him. A basic Bind is +0 OCV, +0 DCV, takes a Half Phase, and if it succeeds allows the two characters to engage in a STR Versus STR Contest as described above.

Characters may use Bind against an opponent's shield. A Bound shield provides no DCV bonus to its wielder.

Choke Hold

This maneuver allows a character to Grab an opponent's head and neck and inflict NND damage. A Choke Hold works just like a normal Grab for purposes of determining whether the victim escapes (for example, he gets an immediate Casual STR roll to break free and take no damage, and the OCV/DCV penalties for Grabbing/being Grabbed apply). However, it only immobilizes one "limb" — the head. Besides being Grabbed, the victim of a Choke Hold takes the listed NND damage and cannot speak or shout. (The character using Choke Hold cannot also Squeeze or Throw the victim; applying the NND hold takes the place of that.) The defense against this NND is having rigid armor on the neck, a PD Force Field, or Life Support: Self-Contained Breathing. If the victim doesn't have one of these defenses, he takes all the damage rolled.

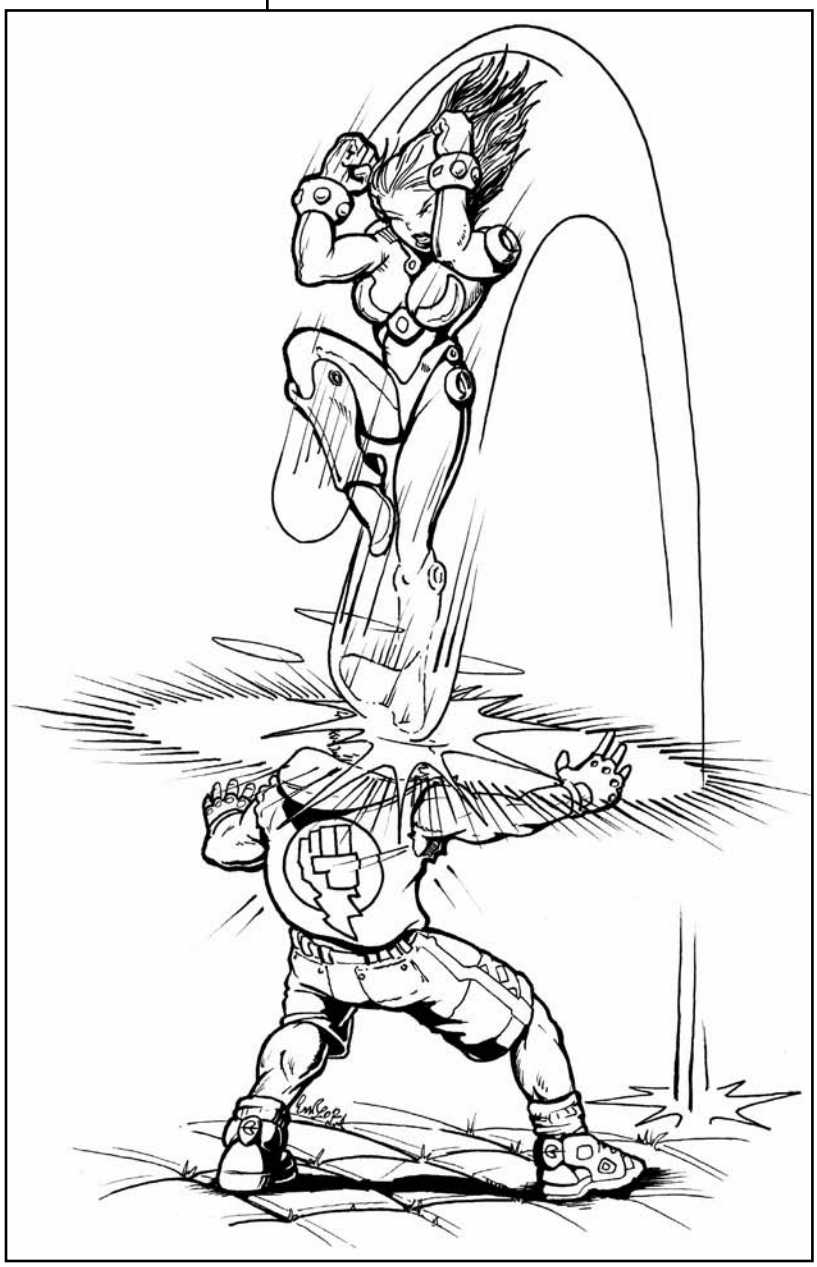
A Choke Hold prevents the use of headbutts. A Choke Hold does not cut off the victim's senses, but might interfere with them (*i.e.,* cause PER Roll penalties, as determined by the GM). It might cut off,

or diminish the effectiveness of some powers (such as a sonic scream), but that's up to the GM, who should make the call in light of game balance considerations, common sense, and dramatic sense — a PC shouldn't be allowed to turn a 4-point Martial Maneuver into a frequently-used Drain All Powers Emanating From The Head.

A character rendered unconscious by a Choke Hold can be killed by continued application of the Maneuver. After the Choke Hold has rendered the target unconscious, it does 1 BODY per Phase to the target if it's maintained. (See *Holding Breath and Drowning,* page 142.)

A character may make a Choke Hold one-handed, using the usual rules for Grabbing with only one hand (see below under *Grab*). This only affects the STR of the Grab part of the maneuver; it still does 2d6 NND(2).

Extra Damage Classes applied to a Choke Hold only increase the NND damage done; they cannot increase the STR of the hold. If a character has Martial Grab, or some other maneuver that adds STR to Grab, he does *not* get the benefits of that extra STR when using Choke Hold. Choke Hold and Martial Grab are completely separate Martial Maneuvers.



Crush

The *Crush* Martial Maneuver uses the *Follow* element. As indicated on pages 93-94 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist,* the *Follow* element means the attack takes place on the Phase following the indicated maneuver/event. To use Crush, a character Grabs his target in a Phase (he could then Squeeze the target, if desired, per the usual rules for Grab). In his next Phase, provided the target hasn't escaped, the character can attack with his Crush. This requires an Attack Roll (modified by the maneuver's OCV modifier, the target's DCV penalty for being Grabbed, and so forth). If a character wants to repeatedly Crush someone, he has to make an Attack Roll each Phase he uses the maneuver.

Flying Dodge

The Flying Dodge maneuver is a popular one in many martial arts campaigns, since if used properly it keeps the combat colorful and exciting in addition to protecting the characters.

If a character has a Held Half Action, he may use it to use Flying Dodge. In that situation, he gets a Half Move and the +4 DCV bonus.

If a character Aborts to a Flying Dodge, he gets the Full Move worth of movement normally associated with the maneuver.

If a character with Flying Dodge moves out of the way of an area-affecting attack, compare the inches moved to where the attack hits (typically the hex the character was formerly standing in) and the attack's size — it's possible that, as with a Dive For Cover, the character's movement didn't carry him far enough to get out of the way. If the Flying Dodge's movement carries him beyond the area covered by the Area Of Effect/Explosion, then the attack doesn't affect him.

If a character uses Flying Dodge to try to avoid a ranged non-area-affecting attack, he still gets to move and still gets a DCV bonus from the maneuver, but he's not automatically missed — the attacker still gets a roll to hit (unlike with Dive For Cover, where the attack would automatically miss). If it's a HTH attack, the Attack Roll is irrelevant, since the character won't be in HTH combat range any longer.

If a character performs a Flying Dodge to, for example, move around a corner so his attacker cannot see him, that does *not* mean his attacker's attack automatically misses. The *HERO System* combat rules model a highly dynamic situation — two or more characters acting in the midst of battle — with a relatively rigid set of timed and controlled actions. It's not as if one character moves while everyone else does nothing, then the next person acts, and so on — all the actions in a combat Segment are occurring more or less "at once," but

are resolved in a certain order to manage the game. The attacker's attack might hit just as the character starts his Flying Dodge or the like. The fact that he declares that he's moving around an obstacle doesn't ensure he'll get there in time — all the maneuver provides is a DCV bonus.

If a character uses a Flying Dodge against a Ranged attack, the Range Modifier that applies to the attacker derives from the distance between the attacker and where the character is at the end of his movement. For example, if a character begins a Flying Dodge 4" away from his attacker (-0 Range Modifier) and ends it 12" from his attacker (-4 Range Modifier), the attacker suffers a -4 Range Modifier penalty.

If a character uses Flying Dodge, but gets hit with an attack anyway, and that attack causes Knockback, calculate the Knockback from the hex the character moved to when he used Flying Dodge.

Flying Kick

Several styles, such as Kung Fu and Tae Kwon Do, have a flying kick of some sort as one of their maneuvers. In *HERO System* terms the flying kick is represented as a Sacrifice Strike, not a Passing Strike, to achieve the necessary level of power (the +v/5 element of the Passing Strike rarely adds enough damage to equal the +4 DC of the Sacrifice Strike). However, in Superheroic games, where characters often have large amounts of movement, a Passing Strike might more accurately reflect this sort of attack.

The Full Move Element

If a character has a Martial Maneuver with the *FMove* element, such as a Passing Strike, he can perform a Half Phase Action before using it. However, that means he can only make a Half Move when using a Movement Power with his Martial Maneuver.

Characters cannot use Martial Arts maneuvers with the FMove element in the same manner as a Multiple Move-By.

Grappling Block

Grappling Block allows a character to Block a HTH attack, and at the same time Grab the person making the Block. If the character just wants to Block, without Grabbing, he can Abort. The character cannot Abort to Grappling Block it if he wants to use the Grab part of the maneuver.

Joint Locks And Related Maneuvers

Several types of maneuvers — the Joint Break, the Joint Lock/Throw, and Grabs defined as "Joint Locks" — are performed by grabbing hold of a limb and bending it in such a way the target cannot use it. Sometimes this involves bending the limb in the direction it's designed to move, but in a manner which "locks" it. More commonly, these maneuvers bends a joint in a way it's *not* supposed to bend. This causes great pain (simulated by the NND DMG Element of the Joint Lock/Throw maneuver). This may also break the joint (the Killing Damage and Disable elements of the Joint Break) or force the target to fall down (the Throw element). The holding and locking aspect of these maneuvers is of course simulated with the Grab element.

In adjudicating the effects of joint-breaking maneuvers, the GM should carefully consider the nature of the attack. Standard resistant defenses, such as a superhero's "bulletproof spandex" or a soldier's flak jacket, offer little (if any) protection against having one's joints bent backwards. On the other hand, suits of metal armor and similar equipment might completely protect the joint from bending the wrong way. The GM might want to grant these attacks a sort of NND effect where the "defense" against the attack is wearing something which keeps the joint from being bent backwards, having pliable limbs (*i.e.,* Stretching), buying an Exert maneuver to fight the effect of the joint-break, or something similar. However, this could make joint-breaks more effective than other types of Killing Damage maneuvers, so the GM should be careful not to unbalance the campaign by doing this.

GMs should also keep the Impairing and Disabling rules (pages 120-21) in mind when characters use joint-breaks; refer also to the discussion of *Disabling Attacks* on page 100.

Killing Strike

This Maneuver allows a character to do Killing Damage to the target without using a weapon. It includes things like breaking bones, throat punches, snapping a victim's neck, and so on. Rules regarding adding STR (as if to an HKA) and what defenses protect against Killing Damage apply to the damage done by a Killing Strike.

Killing Throw

Killing Throws generally divide into two types. The first type, discussed under *Joint Locks And Related Maneuvers,* above, involves twisting a joint to break it *and* force the target to fall down. The damage occurs during the throw, not as a result of the target's impact with the ground. The other is a throw intended to make the target fall in such a way that he takes Killing Damage (broken bones and the like) because of his impact with the ground. Players and GMs should keep these "special effects" in mind when creating Killing Throw maneuvers and adjudicating their effects.

Legsweep

This Maneuver allows a character to knock an opponent's legs out from under him, dashing him painfully to the ground. See *Martial Throw* for details

on the effects of, and restrictions on, Throws (for example, a character cannot Legsweep a target who weighs more than he could lift with his Pushed STR).

Martial Disarm

This Maneuver is identical to a normal Disarm, except that the character receives a bonus to his STR only for purposes of determining the outcome of the Disarm STR Versus STR Contest. The character has his normal STR for all other purposes. The character also receives a bonus to his DCV.

As an optional rule, GMs might allow characters with Martial Disarm to use the Maneuver's STR bonus to resist being Disarmed. This option prevents fencers and similar characters from constantly Disarming each other.

Martial Escape

This Maneuver helps a character escape from Grabs. The character adds the STR from this maneuver to his own STR when rolling BODY to break out from a Grab; the additional STR has no other effect. At the GM's option, characters can also use the STR bonus from Martial Escape when attempting to escape from an Entangle. See *Other Combat Effects,* page 134, for more information about escaping from Grabs and Entangles, including the time required to Escape.

If a maneuver which has Escape as one of its features also has some other element which affects the person whose Grab is being Escaped from (such as Target Falls or Disarm), the second element only works if the Escape succeeds.

At the GM's option, a character does not have to make a complete escape from a Grab or Entangle. Instead, he can try to free only one limb, and then use it as he sees fit. This allows +5 STR on the attempt to "Escape," since the character can concentrate his efforts on freeing just one limb.

Martial Grab

This maneuver is identical to a normal Grab (the standard CV penalties for Grabbing or being Grabbed apply), except that the character receives a bonus to his STR. This bonus only helps the character hold the target; it does not add to damage done by squeezing or throwing the victim. See *Grab,* page 62, for details on Grabs.

Martial Throw And Other Throws

Martial Throw and other Throw-based Maneuvers allow an attacker to throw an opponent to the ground. This has several effects.

First, the Thrower does his STR damage to the Thrown character, plus 1d6 for every 5" of velocity the target had. If the surface is extremely hard or rough, the GM may, at his option, increase the damage the Throw does. The Thrown character may reduce the damage taken from a Throw by half if he makes a Breakfall roll at -1 for every 2d6 of damage done by the Throw.

Second, the target usually ends up prone in an adjacent hex. The Thrower may instead opt to Throw the victim as far as possible; consult the Throwing Table, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 35, to determine this distance. Characters can increase the distance they Throw a victim by subtracting damage from the Throw — every -1d6 of damage adds +1" to the Throw. A Thrown character may keep his feet (or land on them) if he makes an Acrobatics roll at -3; this does not, however, prevent him from taking damage from the Throw.

Example: *"Bull" Robinson is a STR 20 wrestler who wants to use his Slam maneuver to Throw his opponent out of the ring. According to the STR Table, it requires 10 STR to lift a man, leaving Bull 10 points of STR for throwing purposes. Based on the Throwing Table, he can throw his opponent 4". If he wants to hit something with his opponent (say, an obnoxious fan), he suffers a -4 penalty to the Range Modifier.*

Third, if the Thrower and Thrown character both have their next Phases in the same Segment, the Thrower automatically gets to act first, regardless of relative DEX (the Thrower's opponent is delayed until after the Throwing character's DEX). This applies even if the character has made a Breakfall roll to reduce the damage suffered because of the Throw and/or an Acrobatics roll to keep his feet, but at the GM's option does not apply if the character makes a Breakfall roll by half.

If the Attack Roll for a Throw fails, the victim suffers no effects of a Throw: he takes no damage, remains on his feet, and suffers no initiative penalty in relation to the character who threw him.

A character may want to Hold his Action to "block," stop, or interrupt an incoming attack by Throwing the attacker. In this situation, apply the rules for stopping incoming attacks with Disarms (see above).

A character cannot use a Throw-based maneuver to Throw a target who's already prone.

The rules for Throws described here also apply to Throws made after a character has been Grabbed (see page 62).

THROWS AND STRENGTH

A character cannot Throw a target who weighs more than he could lift with his Pushed STR. If a character applies the *Area Of Effect* Advantage to a Throw maneuver, the weight limit for Throws applies per target, not over the entire area.

When using a Throw-based maneuver, a character must use a minimum of enough STR to lift the target. He doesn't have to use his full STR if he doesn't want to. Furthermore, he may, with the GM's permission, use his STR only to "lift," not to cause damage (though he still has to pay END for the STR when doing this, of course).

THROW MODIFIERS TABLE

Surface	Damage	Breakfall
Hardness		
Soft (water, a cushion or mat, extremely soft earth)	—	-0 - +1
Average (carpeted floor, average earth or sand)	+1d6	-1
Hard (wooden or tile floor, packed earth)	+2d6	-2
Extremely Hard (cement or asphalt, metal)	+3d6	-3
Evenness		
Smooth or even surface (floor, most sidewalks)	—	-0
Sloped surface (hillside, ramp)	—	-0 to -1
Bumpy, uneven surface; cluttered surface (stairs, trash-strewn alley, rocky ground)	+1d6	-1

If a character applies the *Area Of Effect* Advantage to a Throw-based Martial Maneuver using the rules on page 104 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist,* the weight limit for Throws applies per target, not over the entire area.

DAMAGE FROM THROWS

If the GM wants more detailed rules for the effects of Throws, the damage a character takes from a Throw depends in part on the surface he lands on. The surface also modifies the Breakfall roll the character can make to only take half damage (see accompanying table). These penalties are cumulative; an extremely hard, uneven surface (say, a sidewalk with a lot of broken bricks and trash lying around) adds +4d6 damage and imposes a -4 to the target's Breakfall roll.

Remember that the Breakfall roll to halve the damage taken from a fall also suffers a penalty of -1 per 2d6 of damage the Throw does. Neither that modifier nor the ones described in this chart apply to a Breakfall roll made simply to stand up without taking a Half Phase.

The Effect Of Velocity

If the target of a Throw is standing still, his velocity is 0" and adds no damage to the attack. If he's moving, use his relative velocity, as discussed on page 70. If he's Thrown in a Segment in which he doesn't have a Phase but the GM judges that he is "moving" (*e.g.,* he's in mid-air or mid-run in a situation when he moved last Phase and is obviously going to keep moving in his next Phase), the GM can assign him whatever velocity seems appropriate. As always, apply common sense and dramatic sense.

Throwing A Target Into Another Target

With the GM's permission, a character can use a Throw-based maneuver to Throw a target into another target. See *Characters As Weapons,* page 134.

RESISTING THROWS WITH SKILLS

Acrobatics

A character may attempt to resist being Thrown if he has the *Acrobatics* Skill (this applies to both Grab and Throw, and maneuvers with the "Target Falls" Element). As described on page 112 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist,* if the Thrown character makes his Acrobatics roll at a -3 penalty, he keeps his feet. (Visually, he may have been thrown and somersaulted instantly back to his feet, or have jumped above the attacking Legsweep, and so forth.) However, he still takes full damage from the attack (including surface modifiers, as detailed in the accompanying table).

Breakfall

As explained on page 113 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist,* a character can make a Breakfall roll to halve the damage taken from a fall (he can also use Breakfall to stand up without taking a Half Phase, but that requires a separate roll). He suffers a penalty of -1 per 2d6 to the roll; if he fails the roll he takes full damage from the Throw. Additional penalties for the type of surface are described in the accompanying table. These penalties do not apply to a Breakfall roll made to stand up without taking a Half Phase.

RESISTING THROWS WITH POWERS

Many Powers enable a character to resist maneuvers built with the *Target Falls* Element. A power which allows the character to resist being thrown sometimes also prevents him from taking damage from the maneuver. This works as follows.

If the maneuver is one where the attacker's impact knocks the target to the ground (such as Flying Tackle and some Killing Throws), the target who uses Powers to resist being Thrown still takes full damage.

If the maneuver is one where the attacker knocks the target's feet from under him (such as Legsweep and Takedown), the target who uses Powers to resist being Thrown takes only half damage from the maneuver.

If the maneuver is one where the attacker levers, unbalances, or redirects the target into hitting the ground, and all the damage comes from the impact with the ground (maneuvers such as Grappling Throw, Martial Throw, and Sacrifice Throw), the target who uses Powers to resist being Thrown takes no damage from the maneuver.

Clinging

When a martial artist uses a maneuver with the *Target Falls* Element on a character with Clinging, he must also roll and win a STR Versus STR Roll: his STR versus the STR of the target's Clinging. If he fails, the target does not fall down. If he ties or wins, the target does fall.

Density Increase, Growth, And Heavy Targets

If the attacker's Pushed STR (whether he's currently Pushing it or not) is inadequate to pick up the target, then his attack cannot Throw the target down. The rule keeps human-strength characters from Martial Throwing 700-ton mecha, for instance, but it applies to all situations using Martial Throw maneuvers, not just those involv-

ing Density Increase or Growth. The GM has final authority over which characters/objects are too heavy for a martial artist to pick up and/or throw.

Note the phrase "...the attacker's Pushed STR (whether he's currently Pushing it or not)..." This means a character can Martial Throw anything he could pick up with his fully-Pushed STR, regardless of how much STR he's currently using. For instance, a STR 5 character in a Superheroic campaign could Push his STR to 15 and pick up 200 kg; therefore, a STR 5 character could Martial Throw any target weighing up to 200 kg. A STR 10 (*i.e.,* normal) character could Martial Throw something weighing in at 400 kg — 880 pounds!

A character can build a Martial Throw-type maneuver with a STR bonus from the Exert basis, with the STR bonus applying not to increase the damage done by the Throw but to add to the character's Throwing strength. Extra DC bought with the martial art with such a maneuver would either add to STR damage or to the Exert bonus, not to both (the character must choose which aspect of the maneuver the Extra DC increase when he buys them; he does not get to switch them around on an attack-by-attack basis).

The GM can adjudicate the effects of these Throwing rules as he sees fit; some campaign styles may call for characters to be able to Throw heavy objects; some may not.

Flight

Characters can use Flight to resist Throws. If the character is not currently flying, has his Flight power available to him, and knows the attack is coming, he can use his Flight to resist being Thrown; he will not be Thrown down. However, if he's already flying, he can't do this; the attacker is already using his Flight against him with the Throw maneuver.

Knockback Resistance

If a character has any Knockback Resistance and is prepared to use it (*i.e.,* is not attacked from Surprise), he does not fall when struck by Throw maneuvers where the attacker's impact knocks the target to the ground (such as Flying Tackle and some Killing Throws). However, all other Throw maneuvers work normally on him.

Stretching; Shape Shift

Throws may not work on characters with malleable bodies — a character with Stretching, and some forms of Shape Shift, simply manipulates or "moves" his body so the attacker cannot get leverage to throw him. GMs should adjudicate this effect on a case-by-case basis.

Strength

A character cannot resist being Thrown with STR.

Nerve Strike

This Maneuver allows an attacker to strike particularly vulnerable or sensitive parts of a target's body. In game terms, this is represented by NND damage. The target takes full damage from the Nerve Strike unless he has rigid armor protecting his vulnerable spots, a PD Force Field, or Lack Of Weakness (any type).

At the GM's option, characters can develop other Nerve Strike maneuvers that are affected by different defenses. For example, solid ear coverings, Resistance, or rigid Resistant PD protecting certain parts of the body might be acceptable defenses against a variant Nerve Strike.

DEFENSES FOR NERVE STRIKES

The *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* describes two basic types of NND strikes and their possible defenses: solid Armor (resistant PD) or a PD Force Field or Lack of Weakness for a Nerve Strike ("NND(1)"); solid Armor (resistant PD) on the neck or not having to breathe for a Choke Hold ("NND(2)"). These options are perfectly acceptable for most campaigns, but can cause problems in Superheroic campaigns or other games where those defenses are common (which makes the maneuvers useless).

If this problem exists in your campaign, there's a twofold solution: first, define the defenses to a Nerve Strike better; second, offer more potential defenses, so Nerve Strikes have some variety. As always, the GM has the final say on what defenses are acceptable. Here's an expanded list of possible defenses, with explanations:

NND 1: Rigid resistant PD on vital areas or Lack of Weakness

NND 2: Rigid resistant PD on the neck or not having to breathe

NND 3: Rigid resistant PD on a specific Hit Location

NND 4: Solid ear coverings

NND 5: Resistance

NND 6: PD Force Field or Power Defense

NND 7: Various defenses against joint-bending; see below

NND 1: Rigid resistant PD on vital areas or Lack of Weakness: The NND(1) defense requires the target to have solid, rigid resistant PD over his vital points. "Rigid" means a sufficiently solid defense to prevent the attacker from being contacting the target's vital points. The stereotypical "bulletproof spandex" worn by many superheroes is *not* stiff enough for this purpose. Nor does the super-strong skin of most "brick" characters suffice, since they still have nerve endings a trained martial artist can find and strike. A brick with tough "plates" in place of skin, or who transforms into rock or metal, probably has "rigid" defenses, as does any brick who took *Reduced Sense Of Touch* as a Physical Limitation because his super-tough skin prevents him from feeling things properly. Suits of powered armor, kevlar backed by ceramic or steel plates, PD Force Fields, and similar types of resistant PD block this Nerve Strike, as do most forms of Lack of Weakness (though not, for example, a Lack Of Weakness defined as preventing the attacker from seeing the weak points).

"Vital points" are particularly vulnerable places on the body. They include nerve clusters close to the skin, places where an attack can quickly and easily cut off blood flow (such as the neck), places where vital organs are relatively close to the skin, locations where an attack can easily interrupt the flow of *ch'i* throughout the body, and so forth. In campaigns featuring a wide variety of humanoid species, such as some science fiction settings, a martial artist may have to buy a Science Skill reflecting his knowledge of a particular species's anatomy to use this type of Nerve Strike against that species. An NND(1) may have no effect, or reduced effect, on some species (particularly non-humanoid ones).

NND 2: Rigid resistant PD on the neck or not having to breathe: This is the defense for Choke Holds and other NND strikes which cut off the target's ability to breathe. The general comments about defenses appropriate for NND(1) apply here as well.

NND 3: Rigid resistant PD on a specific Hit Location: NND(3) is the defense for a Nerve Strike which always targets a specific nerve cluster or vital point. The character must define the target point when he buys the Nerve Strike. As with other attacks targeting a particular Hit Location, such a strike should not receive any to-hit or damage modifiers because of the location struck.

NND 4: Solid ear coverings: NND(4) is the defense for a Nerve Strike defined as clapping one's palms against the target's ears, causing terrible pain (and sometimes disorientation). A "bulletproof spandex" mask or super-strong skin offers no protection against this sort of attack; a helmet, earphone-like gadgets, or having no ears would.

NND 5: Resistance: NND(5) attacks cause so much agony that only characters who can withstand a high level of pain (*i.e.,* who have bought the Talent *Resistance*) have any defense against them. In some cases, unusual nervous systems and certain other powers or abilities might also act as a defense against this NND.

NND 6: PD Force Field or Power Defense: NND(6) usually represents some sort of mystical, *ch'i*/*ki*-based ability to hurt a target by attacking his life force. Only a PD Force Field or Power Defense offers enough protection to save someone from this sort of attack.

NND 7: Defenses against joint-bending: Characters use NND(7) to simulate the excruciating pain caused by maneuvers which bend or torque a joint in a way it's not supposed to move. The defenses against this include Resistance, having rigid armor on the joint in question which prevents improper bending, Powers with a similar effect (such as Stretching), or STR (as a Characteristic or Exert maneuver) double or more that of the STR used

VITAL POINTS AROUND THE WORLD

The body's vital points are known in Japan as *kyusho* (and an attack against those points is an *atemi* strike); in China as *tien-hsueh;* in Korea as *kuepso* or *keupso;* in Vietnam as *huyet;* in Indonesia as *rahasia;* and in India as *marman.*

AVLDS

If you're having trouble making NND strikes effective in your games after using the other suggestions offered in this book, consider converting the NND damage to AVLD damage. This may have major effects on campaign balance, however, so treat such a change carefully and remain willing to return to the old system if it becomes too unbalancing or inefficient.

to bend the joint. In some cases the Talent *Double-Jointed* may have the same effect. Refer to the discussion of joint-locks and similar maneuvers, above, for more information.

DISABLING NERVE STRIKES

Characters can use Nerve Strikes to temporarily Impair or Disable a limb. Refer to the discussion of *Disabling Attacks* on page 100.

TWO OR MORE NERVE STRIKES

As described on page 265 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* characters should not normally have more than one NND attack (at least, not without GM permission). GMs may want to consider carefully whether a character should have more than one Martial Maneuver with the *NND DMG* Element (including Choke Holds). In many cases, NND strikes are different enough that it doesn't unbalance play for a character to have more than one.

Passing Disarm

Standard Disarm rules (such as the Disarmed object goes flying ½d6 hexes) apply to Passing Disarms. If the character wants to be able to keep the weapon or object he snatches from the target while moving past him, he'd need to build a Passing Takeaway type of maneuver.

The Response Element

If a character has a Martial Maneuver with the *Response* Element defined so that it only works after his opponent performs some maneuver or action, the opponent has to complete the maneuver/action — just starting it isn't enough. However, the opponent doesn't have to complete it *successfully;* for example, a maneuver that's a Response to an attack doesn't require that the attack hit or hurt the character. However, if a maneuver Must Follow Block, the character must successfully Block an attack with it; if the Block fails, he can't use the maneuver to "respond."

A Response-based maneuver can only be used against the character who "triggers" it. For example, if an attack Must Follow Block, a character can only use its attack against the person he just successfully Blocked; he can't make an attack against some third party.

If a character has a Martial Maneuver with Response that specifies an attack as the precondition for the maneuver, that means any type of that attack. For example, a maneuver with "Must Follow Grab" works with any type of Grab — *i.e.,* a standard *Grab* Combat Maneuver, or any Maneuver with the "Grab Opponent" Element (Martial Grab, Grappling Block, Joint Lock, or the like). The GM has the final say as to what sort of attacks trigger a "Must Follow" maneuver.

Root

Characters use the Root maneuver to counter the Shove maneuver (see below). Use the STR from a Root to calculate the total STR opposing a Shove. Of course, if the character resists the Shove successfully, he does not move at all, and the character attempting the Shove is left looking foolish.

Note, however, that Root also has the "Block" element. This is just another way of defining the resistance to being Shoved: if the character Blocks the Shove, it has no effect on him at all. The special effect in this case is "immovability," not the typical block associated with most martial arts — the Shover has struck the Rooted character solidly, but has not moved him! If the Block fails, the character can still use the extra STR from the Root to resist Shove. In most cases, the GM should not allow characters to use the Block element of the Root maneuver to Block attacks other than Shoves, but this depends upon the situation.

Characters with the Root maneuver may add its STR to their own when they brace to resist Knockback (page 127).

Sacrifice Throw

This maneuver is basically identical to a Martial Throw. However, the victim cannot be Thrown for distance — he must land in the Thrower's hex or an adjacent hex — and the Thrower himself ends up prone in his own hex. A character cannot use Breakfall to keep his footing when he performs a Sacrifice Throw, but can use Breakfall in a subsequent Phase to get to his feet without using a Half Phase.

Shove

The discussion of "Grab And Shove," above, generally applies to the Shove maneuver as well. However, Shove offers several additional benefits. First, when using Shove, a character does not have to Grab his opponent, which can be time-consuming and potentially dangerous.

Second, a character using Shove can propel his target back more than 1", and does not have to move with him. For every 10 STR in the Shove maneuver, a character can push a target back 1"; thus, at even its lowest level a Shove moves its target back 2". A Shoved character can make a DEX, Breakfall, or Acrobatics roll (his choice) at -1 for every point by which the Shoving character made his Attack Roll to fall down at any point during his "move." This eliminates any further movement and halves the damage the Shove would have caused. However, the fallen character is at the same disadvantage as a Thrown character — the Shoving character gets to attack him first on their next Phase (if they both have their next Phase in the same Segment), regardless of relative DEX.

The third advantage to Shove is that the extra STR of the maneuver not only adds to the distance a character can move his target, it adds to any

damage he does if he shoves the target into a solid object. The target cannot take more dice of damage than the (DEF+BODY) of the object he hits (just like Knockback).

The fourth advantage to Shove is that a character can use it on more than one target at a time, in two ways. First, an attacker can Shove one target into another target, causing damage to both of them. The attacker needs to make a separate Attack Roll to hit the second target; any OCV bonuses bought with the Shove maneuver do not apply to hitting the second target.

Second, in some instances a character can use his Shove maneuver on several characters simultaneously — for example, when he's holding a staff and several thugs grab it and he Shoves all of them off of him. In this sort of situation, the Shoving character uses his base STR plus Shove maneuver bonus STR. To calculate the combined STR of the characters resisting the Shove, determine their *lifting capacity,* based on the Strength Table on page 34 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised.* Add their lifting capacities together, then use that figure and the Strength Table to determine their combined STR for the purpose of resisting a Shove.

Example: *Three thugs attack Cheng Fei, a practitioner of Tai Ch'i Ch'uan. Cheng gets his forearm between himself and the three thugs as they try to knock him down, so he decides to push them away from him, using his Shove maneuver; he has STR 40 for this purpose. The thugs have STRs of 10, 15, and 10. Their lifting capacities are 100, 200, and 100 kilograms, respectively, for a total of 400 kg. This equals STR 20 for purposes of resisting Shove. Cheng rolls 9 BODY on his dice, the thugs roll 3 on theirs, so they're thrown back 4" from their intended target!*

Shove only works on opponents that can fight back; characters cannot ordinarily use it against inanimate objects. However, a character could build a similar Exert-based maneuver that worked on objects, if the GM allowed.

The GM can apply the rules and guidelines for resisting Throws with Powers (see above) to efforts to resist Shove, if appropriate and desired. However, in general, Knockback Resistance should *not* have any effect — Shoving is not Knockback, and doesn't really depend on "impact" the way some Throws do. For Clinging, use the standard "STR versus Clinging" rules on page 143 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised.*

Shove As A Standard Maneuver

At the GM's option, any character can shove another character the same distance he could throw him with a Prone Throw. This is a standard combat action involving STR and doesn't require the character to purchase any maneuver. The GM may, if he wishes, allow a character with only 0 Extra STR to still shove someone ½". The general rules for Shove apply to this type of shoving.

Takeaway

Visually, a Takeaway can look as rough as grabbing a weapon and yanking it out of the target's hand, or can be more elegant, resembling a Disarm in which the weapon flies out of the target's hand and into the attacker's. In any event, the attacking character takes no damage from the weapon when he takes it away.

When a character performs a Takeaway, he can immediately toss the weapon to someone or hand it to a character in his hex or an adjacent hex as an Action which takes no time. Tossing the weapon at someone to hurt or even distract him constitutes an attack, so he can't do it until his next Phase.

If a character has a Takeaway maneuver, at the GM's option he can use it to defend against Takeaway maneuvers used by persons attacking him, using the same optional rule as for Disarms (page 61).

The Velocity/5 Element

If a character uses a Martial Maneuver with the v/5 Element, such as a Martial Throw, he does not take damage if he fails to do Knockback to the target. The v/5 Element does not impose any requirement on characters to do Knockback or suffer damage — that's one way in which they tend to be better than the standard Move By or Move Through, which is why characters have to pay Character Points for them instead of getting to use them for free. If a character wants to create a maneuver that has that requirement, he can use the Take Half/Full Damage restrictive Element to build the maneuver and work with the GM to define the damaging aspect as only affecting him if he fails to do Knockback.

As always, the GM should evaluate each situation individually, and decide based on common sense, dramatic sense, special effects, and considerations of game balance what happens. Regardless of the maneuver used, a GM might decide that a character who's stupid enough to charge right into a brick wall will probably hurt himself.

Weapon Element

Some martial arts styles teach the use of weapons with Martial Maneuvers. In fact, some styles, like Fencing, require a weapon. In the latter case, the character doesn't have to pay points to use the style's Martial Maneuvers with a weapon — that's what he learned when he bought the Maneuvers (he can't use them barehanded). Other styles assume unarmed use of Maneuvers as a default.

To use his unarmed Martial Maneuvers with a weapon, a character must purchase a *Weapon Element* for each class of weapons he wishes to use with his Maneuvers. (It may help conceptually if you think of the term "Weapon Element" as meaning "a Skill Characters Buy To Let Them Add

Martial Maneuver Damage To An Attack.") Use the subcategories in the Weapon Familiarity Table (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 75-76) to determine what categories of weapons a Weapon Element can be bought for. For example, to use a martial arts style with three subcategories (Blades; Axes/Maces/Hammers/Picks; Staffs) costs 3 Character Points (1 point per weapon category). Similarly, a character with natural weaponry (such as claws or fangs) can't automatically use his Martial Arts with them for free; he needs Weapon Element: Natural Weaponry, WE: Claws, or the like (however the GM permits him to define it).

Example: *Isao has a katana and wants to add Martial Maneuver damage and modifiers to its damage when he uses this. He knows Karate, a martial art intended primarily for barehanded (unarmed) use. Therefore, if he wants to add Martial Maneuver damage and modifiers to his katana, he must buy an appropriate Weapon Element (WE: Blades, in this case). If he'd bought the martial art Kenjutsu, which is intended for use with swords as a default, he wouldn't have had to buy a Weapon Element to use his Martial Maneuvers to improve his katana's damage — that's how Kenjutsu works by default.*

Example: *Black Fang, a werewolf, has claws. He has the martial art of Kung Fu. He wants to add Martial Maneuver damage and modifiers when he uses his claws, so he must buy Weapon Element: Claws. Alternately, he could buy a Martial Art that he defined as working by default with his claws; then he wouldn't need a WE: Claws, use, but would need Weapon Element: Barehanded to use the Martial Maneuvers with just his STR.*

One exception to the Weapon Element rules: characters can add Hand-To-Hand Attack damage to Martial Arts normally, as stated on page 185 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised.* This only applies to HA bought as an innate power, though — if a character uses HA to create a weapon like a club or a staff, he needs a Weapon Element to use that weapon with his Martial Maneuvers.

A few Weapon Elements (*e.g.,* Use Art In Zero Gravity, Use Art In Armor) work a little differently — they function sort of as Limited forms of Environmental Movement, allowing characters to use their Martial Arts in situations where they would otherwise be unable to use them or suffer penalties.

A Weapon Element, if purchased, applies to all Martial Arts a character knows. However, a "free" Weapon Element gained by purchasing a weapon-based style such as Fencing, does not carry over to any other maneuvers or styles. Having a Weapon Element with a weapon does not remove or negate a weapon's inherent OCV penalty (if it has one).

In Heroic campaigns, a character can only buy a Weapon Element for weapons he has WF with. In a Superheroic game, where a character pays Character Points for his weapons, he does not have to buy the appropriate WF to use his weapons with his Martial Maneuvers. However, he does have to buy the appropriate Weapon Elements.

+1 Damage Class

Characters may improve their Martial Maneuvers by buying Extra Damage Classes. Each Extra DC adds one Damage Class to any Maneuver that does Normal Damage (such as Martial Strike or Martial Throw) (it takes two Extra DCs to add +1 DC to a Killing Damage attack; see page 108), or +5 STR to any Maneuver that grants extra STR for limited purposes (such as Martial Grab).

An Extra Damage Class adds to *all* of a character's Martial Maneuvers — he doesn't have to purchase Extra DCs maneuver by maneuver. Characters cannot purchase half an Extra DC, nor apply Limitations to Extra DCs. However, if he wants to simulate a special form of attack, he could buy some Extra DCs at full price, then voluntarily restrict them to only certain Maneuvers for no point savings.

A character can choose not to use his Extra DCs if he wants to do less damage than normal.

MARTIAL ARTS STYLES

Martial Maneuvers are often grouped together into *styles* that represent classic martial arts such as Karate, Wrestling, or Kung Fu. Characters need not buy every Maneuver and Skill listed in a given Martial Arts package to be practitioners of a style, but must spend at least the minimum 10 Character Points on Martial Maneuvers. Characters who spend at least 15 Character Points on the style's Martial Maneuvers, have a Knowledge Skill of the style on at least an 11- roll, and have bought at least one 3-point Combat Skill Level with the style can

be considered "black belts." True mastery involves buying all Maneuvers and related Skills as well as several CSLs with the style.

Players may, with the GM's permission and approval, create their own martial arts styles. Such styles should have some sort of unifying theme or doctrine and contain at least four appropriate Martial Maneuvers.

BOXING

Although normally confined to the sporting arena, Boxing is an effective Martial Art that concentrates exclusively on punches and blocks. A boxer is an effective fighter in a straightforward battle of upright punches, but may be at a disadvantage against more well-rounded martial artists because of his lack of throws, holds, escapes, and similar maneuvers.

BOXING

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
3	Clinch	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR
4	Cross	+0	+2	STR + 2d6 Strike
5	Hook	-2	+1	STR + 4d6 Strike

Paramedics
KS: Boxing

DIRTY INFIGHTING

This isn't a typical martial art; rather, it's a collection of low blows and dirty tricks used by streetfighters and barroom brawlers.

DIRTY INFIGHTING

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	½d6 HKA
4	Low Blow	-1	+1	2d6 NND ([def. is Resistant PD on groin])
4	Punch	+0	+2	STR + 2d6 Strike
5	Roundhouse	-2	+1	STR + 4d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	STR + v/5, Target Falls

Streetwise
WF: Blades (switchblades and the like)

FENCING

Fencing is the European art of swordfighting. All the maneuvers in this package require a sword; the character cannot use them barehanded (except possibly the Parry, which could be made with objects other than a sword with the GM's permission). You can use Fencing as an example of how to design other weapons-based styles, such as Escrima or Kenjutsu.

FENCING

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	*Froissement*	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
4	Parry	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5	Slash	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Thrust	+1	+3	Weapon damage

WF: Blades
KS: Fencing

GENERIC MARTIAL ARTS

This package represents the "generic" martial arts style practices by many comic book superheroes, pulp fiction adventurers, and the like.

GENERIC MARTIAL ARTS

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	STR + v/5; Target Falls

JUJUTSU

Jujutsu (better known as its more sport-oriented form, Judo) is a defensive art that focuses on throws and holds. Typically the *jujutsuka* slams his opponent to the ground and then applies a choke hold.

JUJUTSU

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
4	Escape	+0	+0	+15 STR Escape
4	Joint Lock	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR for holding on
3	Sacrifice Throw	+2	+1	STR Strike; Target Falls; You Fall
3	Slam	+0	+1	STR + v/5, Target Falls
4	Strike	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike

Breakfall
KS: Jujutsu

KARATE

Karate is a fast, straightforward Okinawan style designed to defeat an enemy as quickly as possible.

KARATE

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
4	Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
4	Knifehand Strike	-2	+0	½d6 HKA
4	Punch/ Snap Kick	+0	+2	STR + 2d6 Strike
5	Side/Spin Kick	-2	+1	STR + 4d6 Strike

WF: Common Melee Weapons
KS: Karate

KUNG FU

Originating in China, Kung Fu is one of the oldest and most diverse martial arts styles ever created. It has hundreds of substyles, some concentrating on rapid strikes, others on defense or circular attacks.

KUNG FU

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR
4	Dodge	+0	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
4	Escape	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
3	Joint Lock/ Grab	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR
5	Kick	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
4	Knife Hand	-2	+0	½d6 HKA
3	Legsweep	+2	-1	STR +1d6, Target Falls
4	Punch	+0	+2	STR +2d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	STR +v/5, Target Falls
4	*Tien-hsueh* Strike	-1	+1	2d6 NND

Acrobatics
Breakfall
WF: Common Melee Weapons
KS: Kung Fu

WRESTLING

Wrestling, one of the world's oldest martial arts with variants in hundreds of countries and cultures across the globe, concentrates on bringing an opponent to the ground and holding him there.

WRESTLING

Cost	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND
4	Escape	+0	+0	+15 STR Escape
3	Hold	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, +10 STR for holding on
3	Sacrifice Throw	+2	+1	STR Strike; Target Falls; You Fall
3	Slam	+0	+1	STR + v/5, Target Falls

Breakfall
KS: Wrestling

OTHER MARTIAL ARTS RULES

The following additional rules cover special cases in which characters might want to use Martial Arts. They're optional, and the GM can also choose to apply them to other forms of HTH Combat.

Armor

Most martial arts styles aren't designed for use while the fighter is wearing armor — armor often impedes a fighter's ability to move and to see, which robs a martial artist of many of the benefits of his fighting style. If forced to use his martial arts in armor, a character may suffer a DCV penalty for wearing armor, and always suffers a -1 to -3 penalty to OCV. The extent of this penalty depends on the amount and type of armor, and the character's fighting style (some styles, such as Wrestling, adapt more easily to armor than others). For example, full plate armor would impose a -3 to just about any style, whereas a chain mail shirt might only impose a -1 to -2 on most styles.

To eliminate this OCV penalty, characters need only buy a 1-point Element for their martial arts style, *Use Art in Armor*. To eliminate the DCV penalties, characters can buy Penalty Skill Levels or CSLs with DCV.

Styles specially intended for use by armored fighters (such as Kenjutsu or Weapons Combat) do not require their practitioners to purchase this Element; it's a "default" Element of that style.

Bound Characters And Martial Arts

When a martial artist is bound, he suffers OCV and DCV penalties.

Hands Bound in Front: The character is at -1 DCV, and is at -1 OCV for all Hand-To-Hand attacks and Combat Maneuvers (including Martial Maneuvers). The GM may rule that he cannot use certain weapons (such as bows).

Hands Bound in Back: The character is at -1 DCV, and is at ½ OCV for all Hand-To-Hand attacks and Combat Maneuvers (including Martial Maneuvers). The GM may rule that he cannot use any hand weapons or punching maneuvers.

Feet Bound Apart: The character is at -1 DCV, and his running speed is cut in half. He is at -1 OCV because he cannot move in on his foe as fast as normal. (This OCV minus is eliminated if he is Grabbing his opponent; see *Grab,* above.) Feet Bound Apart means they are shackled together with chains which allow the character a very short, hobbled stride (usually one to two feet). The GM may rule that the character cannot use any kicking maneuvers (except through use of Acrobatics, or when kicking from a prone position).

Feet Bound Together: The character is at ½ DCV, and his running (hopping) speed is reduced to 1" per Phase. He is at ½ OCV because he moves in on his foe so slowly. (This OCV minus is eliminated if he is Grabbing his opponent; see *Grab*, above.) The GM may rule that the character cannot use any Kicking maneuvers (except through use of Acrobatics, or when kicking from a prone position).

Combinations: These modifiers are cumulative. Two -1 modifiers means a ½ multiplier to the CV, and two ½ multipliers or a ½ and a -1 mean a 0 CV.

For example, a character with his hands bound in front and his feet bound apart is at ½ OCV, ½ DCV, and half running speed. A character with his hands bound in back and his feet bound together is at 0 OCV, 0 DCV, and cannot run (though if he is able to get up, he can hop at 1" per Phase; the GM should require a DEX roll at -3 or an ordinary Acrobatics roll to stand up unassisted, and one DEX or Acrobatics roll per Phase of hopping).

NEGATING THE EFFECTS OF BEING BOUND

The *Contortionist* Skill allows a character to slip out of bonds. Also, if the character has missed his Contortionist roll to slip his bonds, but the situation warrants (*i.e.,* the GM says it's possible), the character with Contortionist can change "hands bound in back" to "hands bound in front" by contorting his bound wrists over his legs.

A character with Acrobatics can negate the effects of being bound for each Phase he successfully makes his Skill Roll. If the character's hands are bound in front, he receives a -1 to Acrobatics; if his hands are bound in back, he receives a -3; if his feet are bound apart, he receives a -2; if his feet are bound together, he receives a -5; and combinations of the above are cumulative (*i.e.,* hands bound in back and feet bound together mean a -8). Each Phase the character makes his Acrobatics roll at the listed penalties; if he succeeds, he can ignore the OCV and DCV penalties of his bound state during that Phase.

Casual STR Versus Barriers ⚠

In martial arts films, characters often punch or thrust through a door, wall, or even roof to stab the assassin on the other side. This can already be done in the *HERO System,* but it's not as effective as in the martial arts films, because the DEF and BODY of the intervening surface reduce the damage done by the attack.

To make this trick work, you can use optional rule: if the character's Casual Strength attack (half the character's Strike damage or half his weapon damage, modified by half his STR) does enough to penetrate a barrier, the barrier does not reduce the damage his attack causes.

Example: *David Li knows his opponent is on the other side of the door. He cannot see his foe and so attacks at ½ OCV; however, his foe is trying to be still and stealthy, and does not see the attack coming, so he is at 0 DCV. David's Attack Roll succeeds. His STR is 15, and his Offensive Strike (kick) adds 4d6, for a*

UNSTRUCTURED SEQUENCE ATTACK EXAMPLE

Inohara Mitsuo and Sotomura Takuji, two karateka, fight one another for the hand of the beautiful Princess Miyoko. Inohara, the younger and less experienced fighter, is DEX 20, SPD 4. Sotomura is DEX 23, SPD 4, and does an average of 2 DC more damage per maneuver than Inohara. After the first two Phases of combat, Inohara knows his chances to defeat Sotomura in a straightforward battle are slim. Desperate to win the hand of the Princess, he decides to risk all on an unstructured sequence attack 4 Phases long.

The sequence begins in Phase 6. Sotomura attacks and does 22 STUN, 6 BODY to Inohara, no Knockback.

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total of 7d6; therefore half of that is 3½d6. The GM rules the door has 2 DEF, 2 BODY. David rolls his 3½d6, coming up with 4 BODY, just enough to get through. David can do his full Kick damage to his unseen foe.

Concealed Weapons And Gadgets ⚠

The *HERO System*'s rules for concealing objects (pages 450-51 of the core rulebook) presume a character's concealing Obvious, Accessible Foci (OAFs) and require a PER Roll versus Concealment roll (with various modifiers) to detect the object. But many of the weapons built for martial artist characters (such as the "Concealed" versions of weapons in *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and *The HERO System Equipment Guide*) are Inobvious Accessible Foci (IAFs). Though they're in "plain sight" most of the time, they're either artfully built into another object, or clever decoration or construction cleverly disguise their true purpose.

The Inobvious part of the *Focus* Limitation corresponds to a Concealment "Skill" of 13- (11- base roll, +2 for the fact that the weapon is built into an object); extremely well made concealed weapons may merit higher Concealment "Skills." Therefore, when someone tries to spot an Inobvious (or concealed) object, that person makes a PER Roll against the object's Concealment roll in a Skill Versus Skill Contest. A successful roll only reveals that there's something unusual in the construction of the item; the perceiving character has to perform a hands-on search with another PER Roll versus Concealment Roll contest to open the weapon up or determine what it does.

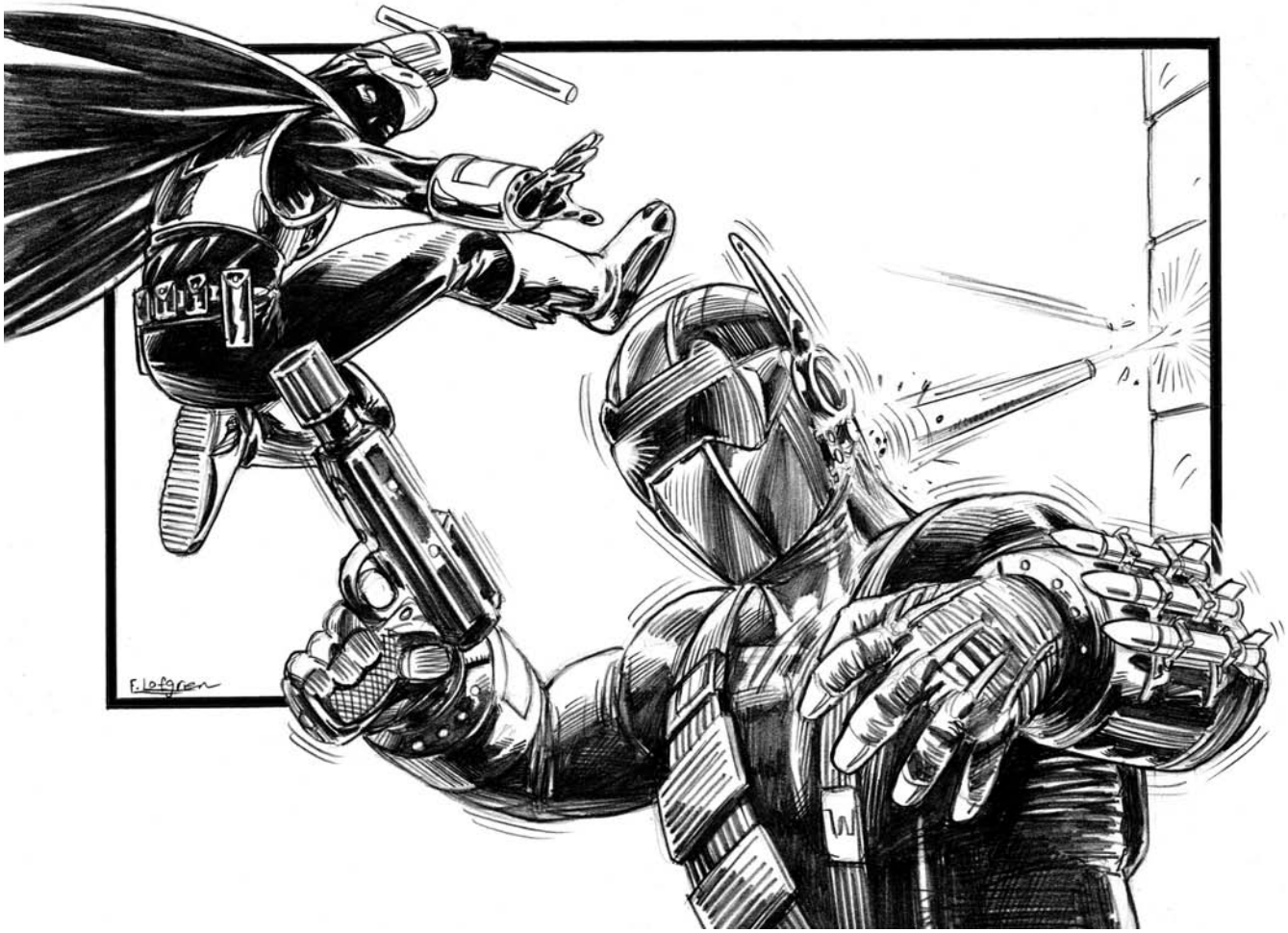
Naturally, once the Inobvious weapon is used as such, it's no longer Inobvious. When you pull your ninja-to out of its sheath disguised as a vacuum cleaner, the other fellow doesn't have to make a PER Roll to realize what it is; its function is now obvious.

Disabling Attacks

Sometimes a character benefits most in combat not by doing raw STUN to an opponent but by disabling or weakening him so he fights less effectively, making it easier to defeat him. In the *HERO System,* there are four ways to attack to disable. Also refer to the rules on breaking limbs on page 116.

STANDARD IMPAIRING AND DISABLING RULES

The first is to do enough damage to a limb to Impair or Disable it, as described on pages 120-21. This form of Disabling usually results from an attack which, though not specifically intended to disable, does enough damage to Impair/Disable the



area anyway. Attacks of this sort suffer the standard Attack Roll and damage modifiers for the location struck (but of course, the damage modifier does not matter for purposes of determining whether a limb has been Impaired or Disabled).

The advantage to using this form of disabling attack is that it's likely to result in long-term Impairment or Disablement. The drawbacks are the Attack Roll and damage modifiers, and the possibility of severely injuring the target.

THE DISABLE ELEMENT

The second way is to buy a Martial Maneuver with the *Disable* Element. Maneuvers of this sort are specifically intended to target limbs, and do not suffer either to-hit or damage penalties for the location targeted.

A Disable-based attack makes it easy to Impair or Disable a limb, or even to break or destroy one. On the other hand, characters can normally only use an attack with the Disable Element for that one purpose, and it may be too severe in some situations. Characters should consider Pulling their Punch or using fewer dice in situations where too much damage to a limb will have inappropriate or undramatic consequences.

DISABLING NERVE STRIKE

The third way to disable a limb is to use a Nerve Strike to temporarily Impair or Disable it. To Impair a location, the STUN done by the blow must equal or exceed the target's BODY score, either before or after modifiers for the Hit Location. If a character has 12 BODY, the Nerve Strike must inflict 12 STUN. To Disable a location, the STUN done by the blow must equal or exceed 2x the target's BODY score, either before or after modifiers for the Hit Location. If a character has 10 BODY, the Nerve Strike must inflict 20 STUN.

Nerve Strike disabling attacks suffer the standard Attack Roll penalties for the area they are aimed at.

The precise effects of the Impairing or Disabling blow are listed on the accompanying table. Of course, a character can make no attacks with a disabled limb.

Impairing and Disabling results from a Nerve Strike do not last very long. To determine how long they do last, roll 1d6 and consult the Nerve Strike Impairing/Disabling Time Table.

The advantage of using a disabling Nerve Strike are that the opponent suffers no permanent injury. The drawback is the temporary nature of the Impairment/Disability.

NERVE STRIKE IMPAIRING/ DISABLING TIME

1d6	Time Condition Lasts
1	1 Phase
2	2 Phases
3	1 Turn
4	1 minute
5	5 minutes
6	1 hour or more (GM's option)

DISABLING RESULTS TABLE

Area	Effect Of Disabling Attack
Head	Target is conscious, but unable to act, and at ½ DCV
Hands, Arms, Shoulders	Target loses use of limb from that point down; anything in his grasp is dropped
Chest, Stomach	Character cannot take Recoveries and is at -2 OCV and -2 DCV
Vitals	Target is conscious, but nearly paralyzed; he's at half movement, ½ OCV, and ½ DCV
Thighs, Legs, Feet	Target loses use of limb from that point down; he's at half movement and ½ DCV

DECLARED DISABLING ATTACKS

The fourth and final way to disable a limb is the Declared Disabling Attack (DDA). This attack, in effect a new Combat Maneuver, is entirely optional and is subject to GM approval — it's a "caution sign" ability.

A DDA allows a character to declare that a particular hand-to-hand attack will be a disabling attack (at the GM's option, this might require a DEX roll or other Skill Roll). The attack suffers the usual Attack Roll modifiers for that particular target. If the attack hits, convert the BODY damage rolled on the dice into Phases of Impairment: one Phase for each BODY rolled. The target takes the STUN rolled as normal, with the standard modifiers for Hit Location. Thus, a DDA doesn't cause any real injuries, but does hamper a character significantly for a short but crucial period of time.

At the GM's option, an especially high DDA BODY roll may Impair the limb for a longer time: the entire combat, the rest of the day, or whatever seems appropriate and dramatic. Alternately, it might do some actual BODY to the limb.

Example: *Jean-Claude, a savateur, realizes he needs to weaken his opponent Francois before he can get in a really telling blow. He decides to use his coup de pied bas (low kick) to target Francois's right knee with a DDA. His normal 10 OCV will suffer a -6 penalty for targeting the Legs. If he hits he will do normal STUN damage to his target, with the x½ modifier, and the BODY he does will become Phases of Impairment. He rolls a 5 and hits! He does 8 BODY and 29 STUN. Francois has 10 PD; his right leg becomes numb and useless for 8 Phases, and he also takes 4 STUN ([29 x ½] - 10). The GM rules Francois's movement is reduced by half, he's at -2 DCV, and he cannot perform several types of kicks because of his Impairment.*

Sequence Attacks

A sequence attack (also known as a pattern attack) is an attack built up over several Phases to gain an advantage over an opponent in the end. Visually, a sequence attack usually requires the attacker to make several feints or attacks whose main purpose is to force the target into a disadvantageous position for the final blow — setting the enemy up for the kill, in other words.

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The young warrior (PD 12, CON 19, STUN 38) shrugs off the pain and begins his sequence attack. He puts all of his Levels into OCV, giving him a total OCV of 10. Sotomura's base DCV is 8, so Inohara needs a 13- to hit him. He rolls an 11, and his first feint succeeds. (Note that Sotomura takes no damage.)

In Phase 9, Sotomura attempts a Knifehand Strike and misses. Inohara counters with a Spin Kick. He keeps his levels in OCV and rolls a 13, barely succeeding and forcing Sotomura further into position. In Phase 12, Sotomura punches Inohara and does 27 STUN, 9 BODY, no Knockback. Inohara is still standing, but the wear and tear are beginning to take their toll. He performs the third part of his sequence and rolls a 7, easily drawing Sotomura further into his trap.

In Phase 3 of the next Turn, Sotomura once again tries his knifehand attack, and again misses. Inohara feints at him again, rolls a 10, and successfully completes his sequence attack. In Phase 6, Sotomura connects with his Knifehand Strike, doing 8 BODY, 24 STUN, no Knockback. Inohara is on the ropes, but now he has Sotomura right where he wants him. He chooses to add

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+4d6 to his normal 6d6 attack, puts all of his Levels into OCV, and launches a side kick. Sotomura's DCV is currently 10, Inohara's OCV is 8. He rolls an 8 and connects! He rolls 43 STUN, 11 BODY, and 2" Knockback, Stunning Sotomura and knocking him out of the ring. The Princess is his at last!

STRUCTURED SEQUENCE ATTACK EXAMPLE

In the example given above, suppose that Inohara had declared a structured sequence attack using these maneuvers: Punch, Punch, Knifehand Strike, and Spin Kick. His attacks are made against Sotomura's regular DCV (his base of 8, plus any levels or maneuver modifiers available). Each hit damages Sotomura, but he only takes half damage. At the end, after each attack hits, Inohara gets a bonus of +4, which he may split between OCV and Extra DC of damage, as he chooses.

Characters can use two types of sequence attacks: unstructured and structured. The GM should decide which of these two types of sequence attacks to allow in his campaign, if any. Although sequence attacks are intended primarily for Hand-To-Hand Combat, in some situations it might be possible to use them with Ranged Combat (for example, deliberately missing someone with three shots to force him into an open area where he has no cover to hide behind).

UNSTRUCTURED SEQUENCE ATTACKS

In an unstructured sequence attack, the attacker does not have to specify in advance which maneuvers he'll use against his target — in fact, maneuvers aren't really used at all. To begin an unstructured sequence attack, the character declares the length (in Phases) of the sequence he intends to attempt. An unstructured sequence attack can be of any length, but tends to have a practical limit of three to five Phases.

To execute the sequence, the character makes an attack against his target in each Phase of the sequence. He makes this attack against the target's base DCV (DCV as derived from DEX, without any maneuver modifiers or Combat Skill Levels). The attacker may use any Combat Skill Levels he has with Hand-To-Hand Combat or with a martial arts style; he may not use Levels which only apply to one or two specific maneuvers. A hit does no damage — it doesn't actually contact the target at all, it simply indicates the target was moved into position for the next part of the sequence.

For the unstructured sequence attack to succeed, the character has to "hit" his target during each Phase of the sequence. If he stops the sequence at any time, if he misses even one of the attacks, or if he takes Knockback/Knockdown, is Stunned, or is Knocked Out, the sequence is disrupted and ruined. (However, if he takes damage without being knocked back, Stunned, or Knocked Out, the sequence is not disrupted — sometimes a fighter deliberately subjects himself to punishment to deliver a truly telling blow against his enemy.)

The character realizes the benefits of making a sequence attack in the first Phase after the sequence ends. That benefit is: for every Phase of the sequence, the attacker may add +1 to his OCV or +1 DC to the damage he does to the target. The attacker must pick one option or the other; he cannot, for example, use half of his Phases for an OCV bonus and half for a damage bonus. Thus, a sequence attack offers the attacker the chance to set a superior fighter up for a devastating blow.

STRUCTURED SEQUENCE ATTACKS

Structured sequence attacks are similar to unstructured sequence attacks, with a few important differences.

First, the attacker must specify in advance which maneuvers he will use in each of the Phases of his attack. Each maneuver must be offensive in nature, whether it's a Strike, Throw, Disarm, Bind, or what have you — no Dodges, Blocks, or other primarily defensive maneuvers allowed. All normal modifiers apply, and the attack is made against the target's DCV as modified by maneuvers, levels, and the like.

Second, if the attacks made during a structured sequence attack hit, the target *does* take damage, but only half damage.

Third, after the attacker successfully completes the sequence, he gains a bonus of +1 OCV or +1 DC damage per Phase of the sequence, and he may divide his bonuses between OCV and damage as he pleases.

DETECTING AND DEFENDING AGAINST SEQUENCE ATTACKS

One of the reasons sequence attacks are so difficult is that they're relatively easy to detect and avoid.

To detect a sequence attack (of either type), the target can make a roll against any of the following Skills: Tactics, Analyze Style, KS: [attacker's specific martial arts style]. If the target does not have any of these Skills, the GM may at his option allow the character to make a PER Roll at -4. Regardless of which Skill the target usea, the attacker may attempt an Acting or Sleight Of Hand roll to make his sequence attack harder to detect; for every 2 points he makes the roll by, he imposes a -1 to the target's roll.

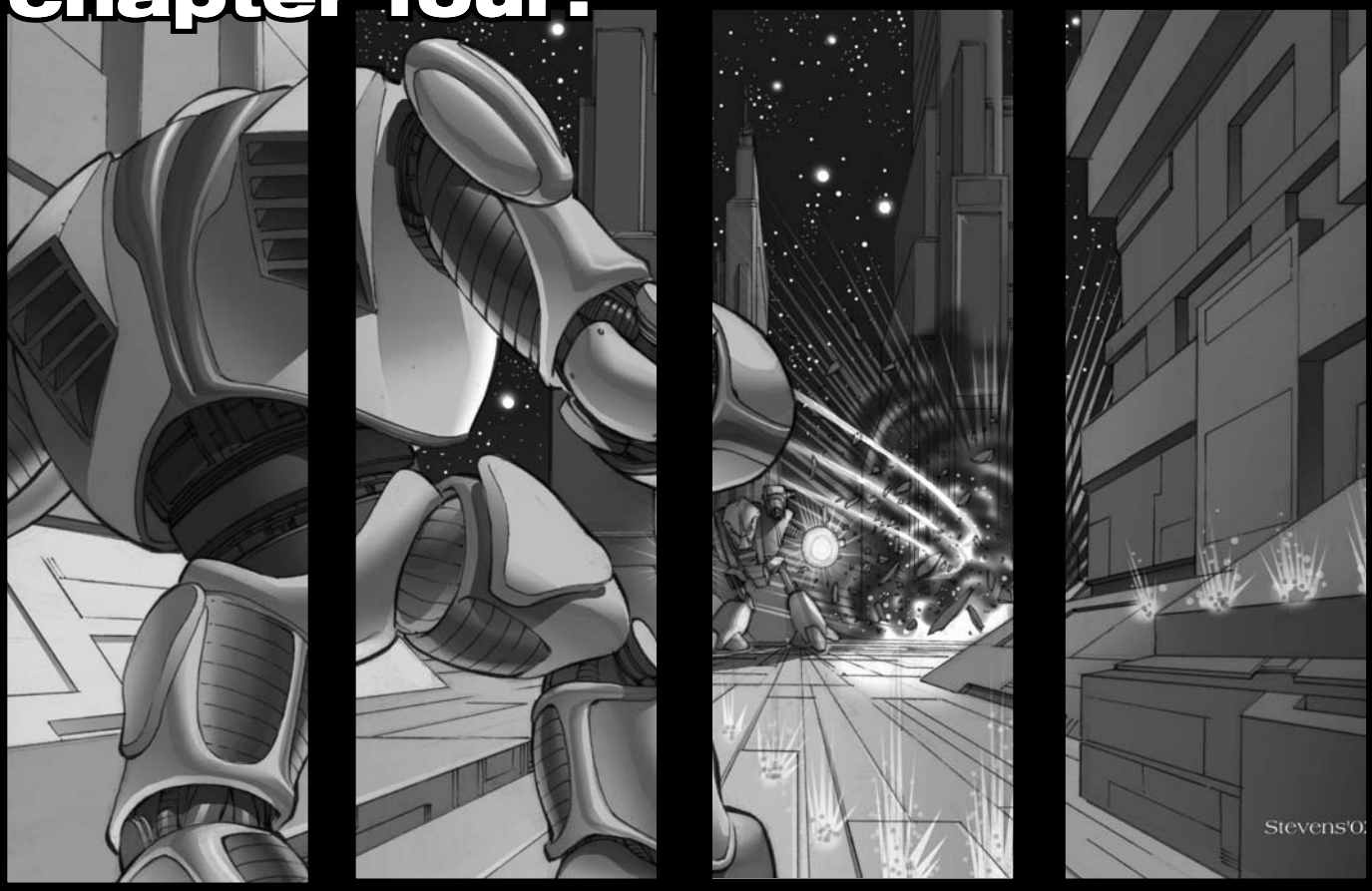
A character can avoid a sequence attack in many ways. The first is to not get hit — if the target can block or dodge even one of the sequence's blows, the whole sequence falls apart. Second, he can Stun, Knock Out, or do Knockback to his attacker, or hit him with a maneuver that ruins the sequence (such as a Martial Grab). Third, he can simply move far enough away from his attacker to force him to make a full move to catch up — this is enough to break up the sequence, since the attacker has to forego an attack to follow his quarry. Fourth, the GM might rule that some Surprise Moves (page 50) disrupt the sequence because they startle the attacker.

SEQUENCE ATTACKS BETWEEN PLAYER CHARACTERS

It's even more difficult for a PC to use a sequence attack on another PC, because it's virtually impossible to hide the fact that the character is using a sequence attack. Once the other player realizes what's going on, he can easily have his character disrupt the sequence.

The only way for a PC to use a sequence attack on another PC without giving himself away is to enlist the help of the GM. Usually this is done in advance, but it can also be done by passing the GM a note or speaking with him privately. The player should inform the GM of what he wants to do, and the GM helps him by maintaining a deceptive front. This requires a high level of player and GM cooperation, and may require the player to give false readings of his die rolls in some cases (for example, in an unstructured sequence attack, telling the other player that an attack made against his character just missed, while secretly signalling the GM that the attack hit for purposes of maintaining the sequence).

chapter four:



DAMAGE AND ITS EFFECTS

DETERMINING DAMAGE

COUNTING THE DICE

One of the things that may slow down your *HERO System* combat is counting the damage dice — particularly if you're in a game where characters have high-damage attacks, such as a superhero game. Here are a few tips to make counting the damage dice quicker and easier:

—Group dice into 10s, such as 6-4, 3-3-2-2-, 5-5, and so forth. Then you can quickly add up the 10s and any remainder dice.

—When counting Normal Damage BODY, compare 6s and 1s. If they're equal, then the BODY damage equals the number of dice rolled (the "0 BODY" from the 1s averages out the "2 BODY" from the 6s). If you have more 6s than 1s, you do that many more points of BODY than the dice rolled; if you have more 1s than 6s, you do that many BODY less than the dice rolled.

Attacks are intended to do damage (or achieve some other effect that puts the enemy at a disadvantage). The amount of damage an attack does, and thus the extent of its effect (if any) upon the target, is determined by rolling dice. Thus, the damage done by any attack varies — an attack might do an enormous amount of damage one Phase, and little or no damage next Phase. The variation in damage from rolling dice makes combat more interesting; it can also provide the GM with details to use in describing the battle (an attack that does a lot of damage may have hit a vital spot; one that does almost none may really have been more of a nick than a direct hit). And of course it's fun to roll dice.

Although there are many different types of attacks and ways to attack someone in the *HERO System,* in most cases the damage done is one of two types: Normal Damage or Killing Damage. This is explained in detail below, but basically, Normal Damage is caused by things like punches, clubs, and Energy Blasts; it's intended primarily to Stun the target. Killing Damage is done by things like bullets, swords, and claws, and is intended to injure or kill the target.

How Many Dice Do I Roll?

For characters with powers that they use to attack, the amount of damage depends on the number of dice of effect purchased or Active Points in the Power used to build the ability (which in turn depends on the number of Character Points spent on the Power).

For *weapons,* the number of dice of damage depends on the weapon type. Refer to the weapons tables on *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 481-86 for the damage ratings for some typical weapons. STR may add to the damage done with melee weapons.

For *unarmed combat,* the number of dice of damage depends on the character's STR, plus any extra damage for the type of Combat Maneuver used. Divide the character's STR by 5 to get the base number of dice of Normal Damage done by the character. A character with a STR of 20 could roll up to 20/5 = 4d6 of Normal Damage.

Of course, characters can buy STR in totals that aren't multiples of 5. If a character's STR is over half way to the next multiple of 5 (*i.e.,* the STR rating ends in 3, 4, 8, or 9), he can add ½d6 of effect. For instance, someone with a STR of 23 would do 4½d6 of damage with a punch (23/5 = 4.6). A character doesn't have to use his full STR when attacking; he can also Pull his Punch (see page 78) to reduce the damage his STR does.

Damage Class

Different dice of damage are not the same — 1d6 of Killing Damage is much more likely to injure a target than a 1d6 Normal Damage attack. However, it's necessary for game purposes to establish a rough comparison between different types of damage.

The *Damage Class* ("DC") of an attack provides a way to do this. An attack's DC is based on the number of Active Points in it divided by 5. Thus, an Energy Blast 3d6 and Ranged Killing Attack 1d6 (each with 15 Active Points) are both Damage Class 3 — or, in more game-oriented terms, each has 3 DCs. On the average, any attack of a given Damage Class is equally as harmful for the target as any other attack of that Damage Class — but of course, since different attacks have different effects, sometimes one will be more desirable or "better" than another in a particular situation or for a particular purpose.

The basic rule for Damage Classes is: *1 DC equals 5 Active Points in the Power.* Thus, a power with 45 Active Points has 9 DCs (which would be 9d6 Normal Damage or 3d6 Killing Damage). Put another way, each d6 of Killing Damage is 3 DCs, each d6 of Normal Damage is 1 DC.

DAMAGE CLASS TABLE

DC	Killing	Normal	10-point*	Active Points
1	1 pip	1d6	½d6	5
2	½d6, 1d6-1	2d6	1d6	10
3	1d6	3d6	1½d6	15
4	1d6+1	4d6	2d6	20
5	1½d6, 2d6-1	5d6	2½d6	25
6	2d6	6d6	3d6	30
7	2d6+1	7d6	3½d6	35
8	2½d6, 3d6-1	8d6	4d6	40
9	3d6	9d6	4½d6	45
10	3d6+1	10d6	5d6	50
11	3½d6, 4d6-1	11d6	5½d6	55
12	4d6	12d6	6d6	60
13	4d6+1	13d6	6½d6	65
14	4½d6, 5d6-1	14d6	7d6	70
15	5d6	15d6	7½d6	75
16	5d6+1	16d6	8d6	80
17	5½d6, 6d6-1	17d6	8½d6	85
18	6d6	18d6	9d6	90
19	6d6+1	19d6	9½d6	95
20	6½d6, 7d6-1	20d6	10d6	100

...and so forth.

* This column is included for the sake of convenience; it shows the DCs of Powers such as Drain or many NNDs, which cost 10 Active Points per 1d6.

Damage Classes Of Advantaged Powers

Determining the Damage Classes of an attack to which a character has applied Power Advantages is a little more difficult. Each DC remains equal to 5 Active Points, so to figure out how many DCs each dice of damage is worth, you must determine the Active Point cost of 1d6 worth of the Power. To do this, multiply the cost of 1d6 of the Power by the value of all Advantages that directly affect how the victim takes damage (see sidebar). For example, the Power Advantages *No Normal Defense* and *Armor Piercing* would be applied, while *Reduced Endurance* or *Indirect* would not. Then divide that number by 5, and you'll know how many DCs it takes to get an entire 1d6 worth of that Power.

Example: *To determine the Damage Class of an NND Energy Blast, start with the base Power — Energy Blast, which has 1d6 per DC. NND is a +1 Power Advantage, so each d6 costs (5 x (1 + 1)) = 10 Active Points. Dividing 10 Active Points by 5 Active Points yields a 2. Therefore it takes 2 DCs to get 1d6 Energy Blast NND, so each DC of an Energy Blast NND is ½d6 damage.*

Now something trickier. Assume a character has a Major Transform bought with the Power Advantage Penetrating. Each d6 of Major Transform costs 15 Character Points, and Penetrating is a +½ Advantage, so the total number of Character Points per 1d6 is 22. Divide that by 5, and you discover it takes 4 DCs to add 1d6. Adding or subtracting 1 DC would therefore have no effect (there's no such thing as a quarter-die of damage), but a change in 2 DCs would change the Transform by ½d6.

Normal Damage Attacks

Punches, Energy Blasts, blunt weapons like clubs, and concussion explosions are Normal Damage attacks. This type of damage tends to knock an opponent out (by causing STUN damage) rather than kill him (by causing BODY damage).

For Normal Damage, the total on the dice is the amount of STUN damage the attack does. To determine how much BODY damage it does, look at the numbers rolled on the dice: a 1 is 0 BODY; a 2-5 is 1 BODY, and a 6 is 2 BODY. Thus, a 6d6 Normal Damage attack that rolls 6, 5, 4, 4, 2, and 1 does 22 STUN and 6 BODY. The number of BODY done is usually close to the number of dice rolled.

Example: *Randall Irons uses his 25 STR to hit the nefarious Professor Wong. Because Wong is irredeemably evil, Randall decides to do his full damage. Randall rolls 25/5 = 5d6 for damage. He rolls the dice and the following numbers come up: 2, 6, 3, 5, 4. The total of the dice is 20, so 20 STUN is applied to Wong. The 2, 3, 5 and 4 do 1 BODY each, and the 6 does 2 BODY, so the total BODY damage is 6 BODY.*

NORMAL DAMAGE

Each die for Normal Attack	BODY done
1	0 (zero)
2-5	1
6	2

If a character has to roll a half die (½d6), damage is determined differently. Roll the half die separately, or use a different color or size die to identify it as the ½d6. The face value of the die is multiplied by one-half and rounded up to get the number of STUN done. The ½d6 does 1 BODY if the roll is a 4, 5, or 6.

Killing Damage Attacks

Claws, knives, bullets, and similar attacks do Killing Damage. This type of damage is more likely than Normal Damage to kill an opponent.

Damage for Killing Damage attacks is determined differently from Normal Damage attacks. The total of the dice is the number of BODY applied to the target. To determine the STUN done, the character rolls a STUN Multiplier — 1d6-1 (minimum of 1) — and multiplies the result by the amount of BODY done.

Example: *Armadillo slashes a policeman with his claws, doing an HKA 2d6. The dice rolled are 3 and 4, for a total of 7 BODY. Armadillo then rolls 1d6 for his STUN Multiplier, rolling a 6. Since Armadillo has a standard HKA, the STUN Multiplier is 1d6-1. He rolled a 6, so the STUN Multiplier is 6 - 1 = 5. The total STUN damage done is 7 x 5 = 35 STUN.*

Stun Multiplier Variants

Some GMs may find the 1d6-1 STUN Multiplier difficult to work with. It adds another die roll to combat, and can result in some extremely high (and low) STUN totals for Killing Attacks. If this is a concern in your game, you can use a flat x3 STUN Multiplier for all Killing Damage attacks, rather than the 1d6-1 Multiplier. This reduces dice rolling, math, and the potential for abuse. A ½d6 (or ½d6+1) STUN Multiplier has some of the same effects.

In some campaigns (particularly Heroic ones), the GM may prefer to use the Hit Location Table (see pages 117-18) instead of a rolled STUN Multiplier. In that case, use the STUN Multiplier listed on the table instead of rolling one.

ADVANTAGES THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT HOW A VICTIM TAKES DAMAGE

For purposes of calculating the DCs of an Advantaged attack, as described in the text, the GM determines which Advantages "directly affect how the victim takes damage," since different GMs may have different opinions on the issue. Likely candidates include Area Of Effect, AP, AVLD, Autofire, BOECV, Continuous, Cumulative, Damage Shield, Explosion, Does BODY, Does KB, Double KB, MegaScale in some instances, Penetrating, Sticky, Transdimensional, Trigger, Uncontrolled, Usable As Attack, Variable Advantage, and Variable Special Effects. However, the final decision is up to the GM; he may exclude some of these, include ones not listed here, or both.

ADDING DAMAGE

Characters in *HERO System* combats have several ways to increase the damage their attacks do, such as Combat Skill Levels, Martial Maneuvers, and some Combat Maneuvers. The rules in this section explain how to add damage to an attack.

Doubling Damage

You must always follow a basic rule when increasing damage: *a character cannot more than double the Damage Classes of his base attack, no matter how many different methods he uses to add damage.* A character's extra Maneuver damage, extra STR, damage bonus from movement, and CSLs used to increase damage, put together, cannot more than double the base Damage Classes done by an attack or weapon. For example, a knife (HKA ½d6, or base damage of 2 DCs) cannot do more than Killing Damage 1d6+1 (4 DCs), regardless of how a character adds damage to it. (See below for some exceptions.)

DETERMINING THE BASE DAMAGE

In most cases, the base damage done by an attack is obvious — it's what the character paid Character Points for, the defined damage for a weapon, or the like. Attacks involving STR are a little different.

With Hand-To-Hand Attacks, HA damage counts as base damage done by STR for purposes of the "doubling damage" rule. For example, a character with STR 20 and HA +2d6 does "base damage" of 6d6, which he can double to 12d6 through various means.

For Haymaker and Martial Maneuvers, a character's STR is the base damage. The basic Maneuver damage — such as +2 DCs from a Martial Strike, or +4 DCs from an Offensive Strike or Haymaker — is not the same thing as Extra DCs purchased for a character's Martial Arts (see below). In other words, the basic damage bonus from a Maneuver remains subject to the normal doubling rules. As an optional rule, GMs for many campaigns, such as most *Ninja Hero* games, allow the damage added by the basic Martial Maneuver to count as base DCs just like HA damage, which avoids the "doubling damage" restriction for low-STR characters.

Example: *Chan Hseng has STR 15 and several Martial Maneuvers, including a Martial Strike (STR +2 DCs) and an Offensive Strike (STR +4 DCs). If he uses his Martial Strike, he does 5d6 damage. If he uses his Offensive Strike, he does 6d6 (6 DCs) damage — not 7d6, because he cannot more than double the base damage provided by his STR (3 DCs). (In some campaigns, the GM wouldn't worry about this and would allow him to do 7d6 damage anyway.)*

Now suppose Chan Hseng buys an HA +4d6. The damage from an HA counts as base damage done by STR, so his "base damage" for STR is now 7d6. That means he does 9d6 with his Martial Strike and 11d6 with his Offensive Strike — he can add all +4 DCs from the Offensive Strike, since his base damage is equal to or greater than 4 DCs.

EXCEPTIONS

There are three exceptions to the "characters cannot more than double the base Damage Classes" rule.

Normal Damage Weapons In Superheroic Campaigns

The first is Normal Damage weapons in Superheroic campaigns. Since characters in Superheroic campaigns pay Character Points for their Normal Damage weapons, the weapon's damage simply adds to the character's STR, even if the combined damage is more than double the weapon's damage (as noted above). Thus, a Superheroic character with STR 20 (4d6 HTH damage) and a club (HA +6d6) does 10d6 Normal Damage.

A Heroic character, on the other hand, can only increase the club's damage with STR exceeding its STR Minimum or the other methods described below. In any event, the standard "no more than double" rule applies — he can't make a club (4d6 Normal Damage) do more than 8d6 Normal Damage.

Extra Damage Classes For Unarmed Martial Maneuvers

The second is Extra Damage Classes purchased for a character's *unarmed* Martial Maneuvers. Any Extra DCs that increase an unarmed Martial Maneuver's damage count as base DCs. For example, if a character has a Killing Strike (HKA ½d6, 2 DCs) and has bought two Extra Damage Classes for it, the Killing Strike does 1d6 as its *base damage.* The character may then use STR, movement, CSLs, and the like to increase that 1d6 damage to a maximum of HKA 2d6 damage.

Extra DCs used to add damage to *armed* Martial Maneuvers are considered to be added damage, not an increase to the base DCs. An HKA 1d6 sword used with a Martial Strike with 2 Extra DCs (+4 DCs total) does 1½d6 damage, but its base damage is still just 1d6.

Movement Bonuses To Normal Damage

Some Combat Maneuvers involve adding damage from movement. When the attack involves Normal Damage, the Maneuver description itself indicates the amount of damage the maneuver adds (velocity/5 for Move Bys, velocity/3 for Move Throughs). The extra dice of Normal Damage added from the Maneuver's velocity can exceed the number of dice in the base attack (whether this is the character's STR, a weapon, or what have you).

Example: *Fastbreak, a speedster in a Champions campaign, has STR 20 and Running 26". He performs a Move By, which does ((STR/2) + (v/5))d6 damage. That means he does (20/2 =10) + (26/5 =5) = 2d6 + 5d6 = 7d6 damage. He can still add the full 5d6 from his velocity despite the fact that he only does 2d6 from STR — movement bonuses to Normal Damage aren't subject to the "no more than double the base damage" rule.*

No "Half Damage Classes"

For purposes of the rules about adding damage, there's no such thing as a "half Damage Class." Characters can only add damage in whole DCs. For example, a character cannot use one Combat Skill Level to add "half a Damage Class," because there's no such thing as a half Damage Class.

Similarly, when a character calculates the damage bonus from velocity, or the effect of using STR to add damage by exceeding a weapon's STR Minimum, the normal *HERO System* rounding rules *do not* apply. A character has to have a full 3"/5" of movement (depending on the Maneuver used), or full 5 extra points of STR, to get +1 DC — anything less than that has no effect.

Methods Of Adding Damage

The primary methods for increasing the damage done by an attack are: Combat Skill Levels; Haymaker and Martial Maneuvers; movement (velocity); and in some circumstances Strength.

COMBAT SKILL LEVELS

Combat Skill Levels (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 53) can increase the damage done by a HTH or Ranged attack or Maneuver.

CSLs In Heroic Campaigns

In Heroic campaigns, a character can use *two* CSLs to increase the damage done by a HTH or Ranged attack (whether Killing Damage or Normal Damage) by *one* Damage Class. For instance, a KA 1d6+1 weapon would do 1½d6 if a character used two CSLs to increase its damage; 2d6 if he used four CSLs, and so on — up to a maximum of twice the original Damage Classes, as discussed above.

CSLs In Superheroic Campaigns

In Superheroic campaigns, a character can use two CSLs to add +1 BODY to the damage done by a Killing Attack or +3 STUN to the damage done a Normal Damage attack. (This bonus adds to the overall damage, before the STUN Multiplier, if any, is applied; it doesn't add to each die of damage.) This applies to both HTH and Ranged attacks. However, the damage the character does cannot exceed the normal maximum for the attack or weapon. For example, if a character adds +1 BODY damage to a weapon that does 1d6 Killing Damage, the most BODY the weapon can do is 6, regardless of the +1.

HAYMAKER AND MARTIAL MANEUVERS

The *Haymaker* Combat Maneuver and many different Martial Maneuvers can add a certain amount of Damage Classes (typically two or four) to a character's attack.

Maneuvers Adding To Normal Damage

For Normal Damage (including STR damage), each Damage Class added by a maneuver adds one Damage Class to the attack. This typically means +2d6 or +4d6 — +1d6 for every Damage Class the maneuver adds. Thus, a character with 20 STR (4d6 HTH damage) using a basic Martial Strike does 6d6 HTH damage. (Don't forget the rules about the base damage of STR, as described above.)

Maneuvers Adding To Killing Damage

For Killing Damage, every *two* Damage Classes added by a Maneuver add *one* Damage Class worth of damage to the attack (whether it's an armed or unarmed attack). For example, a Martial Strike (+2 DCs) adds one Damage Class (not two) to an HKA. Thus, a basic Martial Strike (+2 DCs) increases an HKA 1d6 (3 DCs) to 1d6+1 Killing Damage (4 DCs). This effect applies to all types of Killing Damage — armed, unarmed, weapons, innate abilities, and so on.

Martial Maneuvers That Don't Add Damage

Martial Maneuvers that don't add dice of damage — such as Killing Damage strikes, NND Strikes, Exert-based maneuvers, and so on — cannot be used to add damage to weapons or other attacks. If the Maneuver doesn't add DCs to an attack — if it allows the character to do a different type of damage than Normal (*e.g.,* Killing or NND) — it's not going to add to weapon damage at all. Its function isn't to add, but to differentiate. That's why weapons-based styles — Arnis, Fencing, Gatka, Kenjutsu, and the like — don't have Killing Damage-based maneuvers, and why their NND maneuvers (like the *Atemi* Strike in Naginatajutsu) are expressed as straight damage, not a bonus to the weapon like the other Maneuvers.

MOVEMENT

Maneuvers involving movement, such as Move Bys and Move Throughs, add extra damage because of their velocity and momentum. The character must pay END for any movement he uses and for the STR involved. These rules also apply to damage added from growth momentum or Stretching "velocity."

Movement Adding To Normal Damage

For Normal Damage, the Maneuver description itself indicates the amount of damage the Maneuver adds (velocity/5 for Move Bys, velocity/3 for Move Throughs). The extra dice of Normal Damage added from the Maneuver's velocity can exceed the number of dice in the base attack (whether this is the character's STR, a weapon, or what have you).

Movement Adding To Killing Damage

For Killing Damage, a character can add 1 DC for every 1d6 of bonus Normal Damage dice. However, he still cannot more than double the damage done by the weapon or attack (he cannot add more DCs than the attack normally has). For example, if a character with a sword (HKA 1d6+1) did a Move By at 15", he would add +3 DCs damage from velocity, thus increasing the sword's damage to 2d6+1. At most, between velocity and other methods, he can increase the sword's damage to 2½d6 (twice the weapon's base DCs).

Movement Adding To Weapon Damage

When performing Move Bys and Move Throughs with weapons, divide the character's STR by 2 for purposes of calculating extra damage or DC/OCV penalties based on the weapon's STR Minimum. The weapon, not the character, takes the one-third or one-half damage from the maneuver. If the BODY damage done to the target exceeds three times (3x) the weapon's base Damage Classes, the weapon breaks.

STRENGTH AND HKAS

Strength (STR) adds to the damage done by HKAs. A character gets +1d6 to his HKA for every 15 points of STR used with it (or, to put it another way, +1 DC for every 5 points of STR used with it).

In Heroic campaigns, when weapons are involved, the character's STR does not add to a weapon's HKA damage automatically — it only adds damage if it exceeds the weapon's STR Minimum (see *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 478). For every full 5 points of STR the character has above the weapon's STR Minimum, he may add +1 DC of Killing Damage (or, for weapons like staffs that do Normal Damage, +1d6 of Normal Damage).

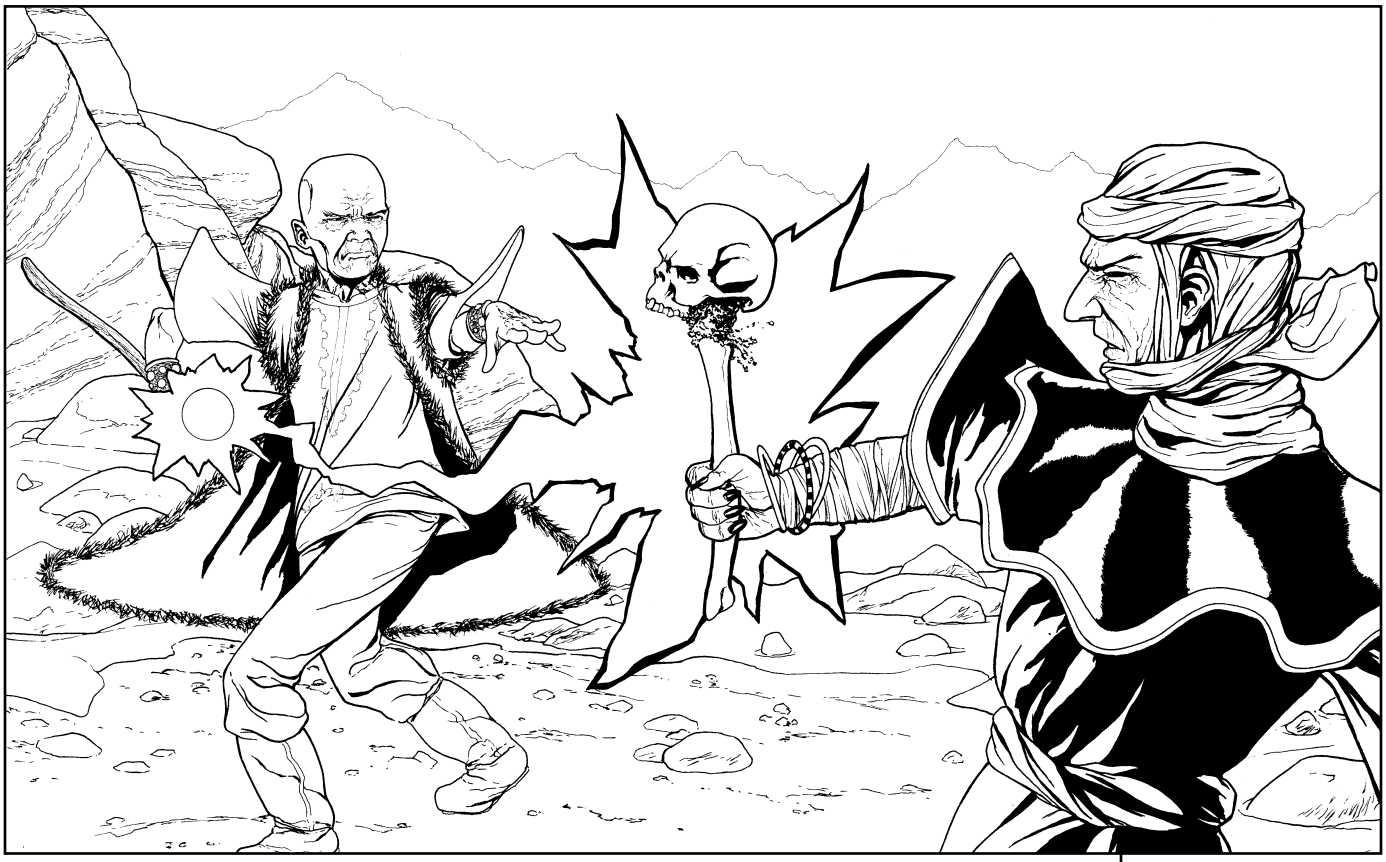
Example: *Brak the Barbarian (STR 21) wields a dagger (1d6-1 [2 DCs], STR Min 6). Since his STR is 15 above the STR Minimum, he can add +3 DCs to the dagger's damage. However, since the weapon's base damage is only 2 DCs, he can only increase its damage to 4 DCs, or KA 1d6+1.*

Later, Brak wields a battle axe (2d6 [6 DCs], STR Min 13). His STR is 8 points above the STR Minimum. That means he can only add +1 DC of damage, since he needs 5 full points of STR above the STR Minimum to add a DC. Thus, he does KA 2d6+1 with the battle axe (if he has other ways to add damage, he can increase the axe's damage up to a maximum of 4d6, or 12 DCs). If he had STR 23, he could add +2 DCs, making the axe do KA 2½d6 damage.

STR And Maneuvers Combined

A character may want to add damage to his HKA with a Combat or Martial Maneuver that would normally add to his STR damage. For example, Move By/Through and Martial Strike all involve adding damage to STR damage.

In this situation, the character typically does *not* get to apply his STR damage twice (*i.e.,* once to the HKA, then once to the Maneuver before it adds damage to the HKA). The HKA counts



as the base damage. The character then increases that with STR. If he can add more damage to the HKA, he may use the bonuses from the Maneuver to improve it (but he doesn't get to add his STR to the Maneuver first). However, the GM may allow a character to "double-dip" and apply his STR to the Maneuver as well (this may be appropriate for some high-powered campaigns.)

Example: *Chan Hseng has STR 15, a Martial Strike (STR +2d6 damage), and a sword (HKA 1½d6, STR Minimum 10). He uses his STR to increase the damage by +1 DC (to 2d6), then uses his +2 DCs from the Martial Strike to add another +1 DC (to 2d6+1). He does not get to add +5 DCs (3d6 for STR + 2d6 Maneuver bonus) to the HKA, since he's already added his STR. However, if the GM permitted, he could do that, thus adding +2 DCs from the Maneuver instead of +1 (for a total of 2½d6).*

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

The GM can also give a character bonus damage dice for extraordinary circumstances or Maneuvers. For example, if a knight in a Fantasy campaign wants to have his horse rear right before he attacks, so that the momentum of the horse's action adds to the force of his attack, the GM might add +1 DC to the attack to reflect that momentum.

Adding Damage To Attacks With Advantages

Adding damage becomes a little more complicated if the attack has Advantages.

COMBAT SKILL LEVELS, HAYMAKERS, AND MARTIAL MANEUVERS

Damage bonuses from Haymakers, Martial Maneuvers, and Combat Skill Levels are not affected by Advantages. They add to an attack that has Advantages at the same rate, and by the same rules, as they do to an attack with no Advantages.

Example: *Chan Hseng wields a knife (HKA ½d6 [2 DCs], Armor Piercing). He uses his Martial Strike (+2 DCs) to increase the damage done by the knife. This means the knife does HKA 1d6 damage — the Advantage doesn't affect the way his Martial Maneuver damage bonus applies to the knife's damage. This remains true regardless of what Advantage the knife has — +1 Increased STUN Multiplier, Ranged, Penetrating, or what have you.*

This rule also applies in Heroic campaigns to damage added when a character's STR exceeds the STR Minimum of a weapon.

STRENGTH

When a character uses his STR to add damage to an attack with Advantages, the main factor in determining how to add damage is the base (unmodified) Active Point value of the attack (*i.e.,* the Active Points in the attack without any Advantages). (This does not apply in Heroic campaigns to

damage added when a character's STR exceeds the STR Minimum of a weapon; as noted above, that's unaffected by Advantages.)

STR And Advantaged HAs

A character who has a Power Advantage on an HA (or other Normal Damage attack to which he adds STR damage) does not also have to buy that Advantage for his STR, and may apply the Advantage to the dice of damage provided/added by STR, if either of these situations exists:

—the character only uses his STR up to the *unmodified* Active Point value of the HA

—the *unmodified* Active Point value of the HA equals or exceeds the character's STR.

"Unmodified" means the Active Points without applying any Advantages. For example, an HA +4d6, Armor Piercing normally has 30 Active Points, but its *unmodified* Active Points are only 20.

If neither of the circumstances described above applies — in other words, if the unmodified Active Points in the HA are less than the character's STR, or the character uses more STR than the unmodified Active Points in the HA — then the character cannot use the HA dice (since the rules don't permit a character to use a Power without using the Advantages bought for it [*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 246] and HA dice can only add to STR damage, not be used on their own [*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 184]).

Example: *A character has STR 15 and an HA +3d6 (15 Active Points when unmodified). He doesn't have to purchase any Advantage purchased for the HA for his STR. If the HA were Armor Piercing (a modified total of 22 Active Points), then the total attack would do 6d6 Armor Piercing Normal Damage — as long as the unmodified Active Points in the HA equal or exceed the character's STR, the Advantage applies to all the dice of damage.*

But suppose the attack was an HA +2d6 Armor Piercing, which only has an unmodified 10 Active Points. In that case, the character has several choices. First, he can voluntarily restrict himself to using 10 STR or less, in which case the Advantage on the HA applies to all the dice. Second, he can buy the Advantage for his STR, in which case the Advantage applies to all the dice. Otherwise, he cannot use the HA dice at all.

There's one exception to this rule: the Advantage *Invisible Power Effects*. A character must always purchase IPE for his STR if he wants an Invisible HA (or other attack to which he can add STR damage) to remain invisible.

STR And Advantaged HKAs

If a character adds STR damage to an Advantaged HKA (or other Killing Damage attack), his STR adds to the attack's damage at a lesser rate.

To determine how much STR it takes to add +1 DC, apply the Advantages on the Power to 5 STR (the basic amount used to add 1 DC). The result is how many points of STR it takes to add +1 DC to the attack. For example, if a character with 30 STR has an HKA 4d6, Armor Piercing, it takes 7.5 points of STR (5 x (1 + ½) = 7.5) to add +1 DC to the attack (so, with 30 STR, the character adds 4 DCs, increasing the attack's damage to HKA 5d6+1; adding +3 DCs would require 22.5 points of STR). As indicated in this example, the standard *HERO System* rounding rules do not apply when determining the amount of STR required to add damage (don't round at all).

For purposes of using this rule with melee weapons, ignore the *Reduced Endurance* Advantage (which all melee weapons must have). STR adds to a weapon with Reduced Endurance as if the weapon were un-Advantaged (or only has whatever other Advantages are applied).

Naked Advantages

If a character buys a naked Advantage for an HKA or other attack, he can still apply damage from STR, Martial Maneuvers, velocity, and the like only if he buys the naked Advantage so that it's powerful enough to cover the whole attack, including damage from additive factors like Martial Maneuvers, it can.

Example: *A character has an HKA 2d6 sword and 15 STR. So, he normally does HKA 3d6 with his sword. If he wants a naked AP Advantage for the overall 3d6 attack, it costs 22 points ((45 x 1.5) - 45). If he has enough damage he can add from Martial Maneuvers to increase the damage to HKA 4d6, he can't use his naked Advantage unless he restricts himself to HKA 3d6 — it's not bought to cover a larger attack. If he wants it to cover an HKA 4d6 attack, it has to cost 30 points ((60 x 1.5) - 60).*

(Technically speaking, it should take +6 DCs [with a point value of "30"] from a Martial Maneuver to add 3 DCs to this Killing Attack, and thus arguably the "cost" of the attack to which the naked AP Advantage applies is "75 points" (45 + 30), so the Advantage should cost 37 points [see UMA 104-05]. However, that's getting a little too complicated. It's easier just to buy the ability thusly — Armor Piercing (+½) for up to HKA 4d6 — and not worry about where exactly all four dice of damage are coming from.)

Advantages For STR

If a character has an Advantage for his STR but hasn't bought the same Advantage for an attack he adds damage to with STR, the Advantage does not apply to the attack at all (not even to the damage dice added by STR), unless the GM rules otherwise. It only applies to the damage done by the character's STR when he uses STR by itself. For example, a character with 20 STR, Armor Piercing, who uses an Offensive Strike (+4d6) or Haymaker (also +4d6) does 8d6 Normal Damage, with no Armor Piercing effect.

Similarly, if a character buys an Advantage for part of his STR that affects how his STR does damage (such as Armor Piercing or Penetrating), he may use the Advantage only if he uses no more than the amount of STR he bought the Advantage for. If he uses more than that amount of STR, the Advantage does not apply at all. For example, if a character with STR 75 buys Armore Piercing for up to 50 STR, as long as he uses no more than 50 STR the AP effect applies. If he uses 51 or more points of STR, the Advantage has no effect at all.

MOVEMENT

To determine how many DCs movement adds to an attack with an Advantage, multiply the number used to determine the regular DC bonus for velocity (5 for Move Bys, 3 for Move Throughs) by the Advantage to determine how many inches of movement it takes to add +1 DC to the attack. (Again, the standard *HERO System* rounding rules do not apply when determining the amount of velocity required to add damage.) Then divide the inches of movement by that number to obtain the number of DCs added.

Example: *A character who can move 20" does a Move Through with his spear (HKA 2d6, Armor Piercing). Normally the Move Through would add +6 DC (20"/3 = 6 DCs) to the HKA, making it an HKA 4d6. However, since the HKA is Armor Piercing, the character must multiply 3 (the number used to calculate the bonus damage from a Move Through's velocity) by 1.5, just as if the Advantage were applied. This equals 4.5. Dividing 20 by 4.5 yields 4.4, meaning the Move Through adds 4 DCs to the attack (raising its damage to HKA 3d6+1).*

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

At the GM's option, characters may ignore Advantages that don't directly affect how a target takes damage, such as *Reduced Endurance, Range Based On STR,* or *Charges,* when determining how STR and other factors add to an attack with an Advantage.

TAKING DAMAGE

Now that you know how to dish out damage, here's how to take it.

Basically, there are two types of defenses in the *HERO System:*

—Normal Defenses, which only protect against Normal Damage. They include a character's natural PD and ED.

—Resistant Defenses, which protect against both Normal Damage and Killing Damage. They include Armor, Force Fields, and PD and ED for which a character has bought Damage Resistance. In Heroic campaigns, Resistant Defense usually indicates some form of armor.

Another important distinction is between *physical damage* (such as punches, bullets, swords, falling, clubs, and the like) and *energy damage* (such as fire, lasers, Energy Blasts, and the like). Defenses usually only protect against one type of damage or the other — a character's natural Physical Defense (PD) only works against physical attacks, and his natural Energy Defense (ED) against energy attacks.

Normal Damage Attacks

Both Normal Defenses and Resistant Defenses protect a character from Normal Damage. A character's main form of Normal Defense are his natural PD and ED. These can be supplemented by defenses bought as Powers (for example, Limited forms of PD and ED, or Resistant Defenses like Armor or Force Field).

PD (and physical Normal and Resistant Defenses) protects against physical Normal Damage; ED (and energy Normal and Resistant Defenses) protects against energy Normal Damage. Subtract the character's total applicable defense from the total STUN done by the attack, and again from the total BODY done by the attack.

Example: *A troll hits Chiron with a club; the attack does 6 BODY and 23 STUN. He has 4 PD plus leather armor with DEF 3, so he takes 23 - (4 + 3) = 16 STUN and 6 - 7 = -1 or 0 BODY.*

Killing Damage Attacks

Only Resistant Defenses offer protection against Killing Damage. A character's natural PD and ED do not normally subtract from Killing Damage (unless made Resistant with Damage Resistance).

A character may apply his applicable Resistant Defenses against the BODY done by a Killing Damage attack. Furthermore, if he has any applicable Resistant Defense, he may *also* apply his Normal Defenses to reduce the STUN of the attack.

Example: *A Vegan shoots Andarra with its maser (RKA 2d6) and hits her in a location not covered by her DEF 6 body armor. The Vegan rolls 6 BODY and 12 STUN. Since Andarra has no body armor in that area, and thus no applicable Resistant Defense, she takes all 6 BODY and 12 STUN — her natural ED offers no protection against the Killing Damage.*

The Vegan's second shot does 8 BODY and 24 STUN, but it hits Andarra's body armor this time. Andarra subtracts her body armor's DEF 6 from the BODY done: 8 - 6 = 2 BODY gets through. Because she has an applicable Resistant Defense, Andarra may also use her Normal Defenses against the STUN damage; she totals her natural ED of 3 and the body armor's DEF 6 and subtracts the total (9) from the STUN: 24 - 9 = 15 STUN gets through.

If a character has Resistant Damage Reduction, but his PD and ED themselves are not Resistant, he may not apply his PD and ED against the STUN caused by Killing Attacks.

Minimum Damage From Injuries

Regardless of whether an attack does Normal Damage or Killing Damage, a character automatically takes 1 STUN for every 1 point of BODY damage that gets through his defenses. He can Recover this STUN normally; he doesn't have to heal the BODY damage first.

Example: *Ogre has a PD of 40, but only 5 of it is Resistant. He gets shot by a .44 Magnum revolver and takes 10 BODY, 30 STUN. After applying his defenses, he would normally take 5 BODY, 0 STUN. Because he took BODY damage, he takes a minimum of 1 STUN per point of BODY taken, so he takes 5 STUN regardless of his defenses.*

Other than this automatic (and usually temporary) loss of STUN, the loss of BODY does not affect a character's STUN. A character can have 0 BODY or negative BODY and still have lots of STUN — he's dying, but awake and active.

Attack Modifiers

Some Power Advantages enable attacks to ignore (partially or fully) a character's defenses. These Advantages include *Armor Piercing, Attack Versus Limited Defenses, No Normal Defense, Penetrating,* and so forth. Similarly, there are a number of Power Limitations (such as *Reduced Penetration*) which affect the amount of damage an attack does. For a full description of how these Modifiers work, see *Power Modifiers.*

EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

There are four major effects of damage. In order of severity, they are Stunning, Knockout, Injury, and Death.

Stunning

If the STUN done to a character (after subtracting defenses) is less than or equal to his Constitution (CON), there's no effect other than the loss of STUN. If the STUN done to a character by a single attack (after subtracting defenses) exceeds his CON, he's *Stunned.*

A Stunned character's DCV instantly drops to ½ (as do the modifiers for making Placed Shots against him). At the end of the Segment, any of his Powers that aren't Persistent, and any Skill Levels of any type, turn off. The character remains Stunned and can take no Action until his next Phase (he cannot even Abort to a defensive Action). A character who is Stunned or recovering from being Stunned can take no Actions, take no Recoveries (except his free Post-Segment 12 Recovery), cannot move, and cannot be affected by Presence Attacks. Stunned characters typically retain their grip on objects they are holding, but this may depend on the object being held (heavier ones are dropped more often than light ones) and the nature of the attack.

A character is Stunned by any sufficiently large loss of STUN, no matter how he loses it. STUN damage from an Energy Blast or Killing Attack, reduction of STUN due to a Drain STUN, loss of STUN due to a Dependence or Susceptibility, and the pain of an Ego Attack, to name just a few, can all Stun a target.

At no point does a character suffer BODY damage because of the amount of STUN damage he's taken. STUN is STUN and BODY is BODY, and taking STUN, even in massive amounts, doesn't cause a character to take BODY damage. (But see page 88 regarding choking a character to death.)

If a character is Stunned, and takes enough damage to be Stunned *again* before he gets to recover from being Stunned, he doesn't have to recover twice — he was already Stunned, so he can't be "Stunned more." One recovery from being Stunned takes care of both.

If a character is Stunned by a Constant attack, he can recover from being Stunned if he has a Phase in a Segment in which his attacker does not (and therefore in which he does not take damage from the Constant attack).

If a character has been Presence Attacked to the point where he can only take a Half Phase Action, and later in that same Segment, but before he gets to take his Half Phase Action, he's Stunned, he can recover from being Stunned by using his Half Phase Action. If a character recovers from being Stunned, and someone Presence Attacks him later in that same Segment to the point where he can only take a Half Phase Action, the character only performs a Half Phase in his next full Phase.

TAKING DAMAGE

Here's a summary of the rules on taking damage:

1. If the attack does Normal Damage (fists, clubs, Energy Blasts):

   a. Add all applicable forms of Defense — both Normal and Resistant — together to determine the character's total Defense.

   b. Subtract the character's total Defense from the STUN damage done by the attack. The remainder is how much STUN damage he suffers.

   c. Subtract the character's total Defense from the BODY damage done by the attack. The remainder is how much BODY damage he suffers.

2. If the attack does Killing Damage (claws, blades, guns):

   a. Determine how much of the character's Defense is *Resistant* (meaning it protects against Killing Damage). Armor, Damage Resistance, Force Field, and Force Wall provide Resistant Defense; so does armor the character wears (chainmail or plate armor, for example).

   b. Subtract the character's Resistant Defense from the BODY damage done by the attack. The remainder is how much BODY damage he suffers.

      i. A character's Normal Defenses, including his PD and ED (unless modified by Damage Resistance), *do not* reduce the BODY from Killing Damage, even if he has Resistant Defenses.

   c. If the character has *no* Resistant Defenses, he takes all the STUN damage done by the attack.

   d. If the character has any Resistant Defenses, add all applicable forms of Defense — both Normal and Resistant — together to determine his total Defense. Subtract his total Defense from the STUN damage done by the attack. The remainder is how much STUN damage he suffers.

3. If the attack does No Normal Defense (NND) damage:

   a. If the character has the applicable defense, he takes no damage at all.

   b. If the character does not have the applicable defense, he takes all the damage.

Some Advantages, such as *Armor Piercing, Penetrating,* or *Hardened,* may affect how damage applies to defenses.

STUNNING AND MOVEMENT

Technically, a Stunned character immediately stops moving in the hex he was in when attacked. He doesn't take any damage from this, though depending on the circumstances he may soon (for example, a flying character begins to fall). For greater "realism," have the character tumble along the ground in the direction he was moving, decelerating at 5" per hex moved; if he happens to hit something, he takes velocity/5 in d6 of Normal Damage (to a maximum dice equal to the DEF+BODY of the object he slams into).

A Stunned (or Knocked Out) character doesn't necessarily fall down or collapse. It all depends on the "special effect" of being Stunned or Knocked Out, so to speak. However, the GM's well within his awesome powers to rule that a Stunned character does fall down — that would certainly be a common sense interpretation of many situations that Stun a character.

RECOVERING FROM BEING STUNNED

A Stunned character must take a moment to clear his head and recover from the effects. This is called *recovering from being Stunned.*

Recovering from being Stunned requires a Full Phase, and is the only thing the character can do during that Phase. A character can recover from being Stunned in the Segment in which he was Stunned if he had a Phase in that Segment and his Phase has not yet occurred. If a character becomes Stunned while Holding an Action, he cannot use his Held Action to recover from being Stunned — he simply loses it. A character does not recover from being stunned when he takes a Post-Segment 12 Recovery.

In the character's next full Phase after becoming Stunned, he recovers from being Stunned when his DEX occurs in the Segment. He regains his full DCV (and Placed Shot modifiers return to normal), but he still cannot act until his next Phase — recovering from being Stunned is all he can do that Phase. However, after recovering from being Stunned, a character may, if he wishes, Abort to a defensive Action (even in the same Segment in which he recovers from being Stunned).

Example: *Andarra (DEX 20, SPD 3) is Stunned by an attack on Segment 6. She must use her Phase on Segment 8 to recover; she recovers on DEX 20 (so an enemy attacking her in Segment 8 with, say, DEX 15 would have to hit her at her full DCV). Andarra cannot take any other Action until her next Phase on Segment 12, but may Abort her Phase in Segment 12 in Segments 8 (after her DEX occurs), 9, 10, or 11 if she so desires.*

If Andarra were Stunned in Segment 4 by an opponent who attacked on DEX 24, she would recover from being Stunned on her Phase in Segment 4, since she had not yet acted in that Phase.

A character may be hit by an attack in the Phase in which he'll recover from being Stunned before getting to do so (*i.e.,* by another character whose DEX is higher than his). If the character takes no damage from the attack after applying his defenses, he may still recover from being Stunned as normal. However, if the character takes any STUN or BODY damage from the attack, he cannot recover from being Stunned that Phase; he must try to do so on his next Phase instead. (At the GM's option, this also occurs if a character suffers any similar effect, such as losing INT to a Drain INT or taking Knockback.)

Recovering from being Stunned is *not* the same thing as taking a Recovery. A character regains no STUN when he recovers from being Stunned, he merely shakes off the effects of being Stunned (such as having ½ DCV). A character can recover from being Stunned even if he cannot breathe or is holding his breath.

There is no limit to the number of times a character can be Stunned and recover from being Stunned. Nor is there any limit to how much negative STUN a character can accrue, but the GM can establish a reasonable one (such as negative the character's starting STUN, or some multiple thereof) if appropriate or desireable.

Knockout

If a character's STUN total is reduced to zero or below (whether by one attack or multiple attacks), he is *Knocked Out.*

When a character is Knocked Out, he instantly becomes unconscious. His OCV, DCV, and ECV are instantly reduced to zero (Placed Shot modifiers against him are halved), and any attack that hits him does 2x STUN, just as if he were Surprised while out of combat. (The 2x STUN effect applies to any Knockback damage the character takes from the attack that Knocked him Out, unless the GM rules otherwise.) At the end of the Segment, any of his powers that aren't Persistent turn off, and he drops any held objects.

If a character is only barely Knocked Out (down to -10 STUN), he's not completely unconscious — in fact, it's more like he's deeply Stunned. Depending upon the character and the nature of the attack, he may even be on his feet, wobbly but still standing, as he tries to shake off the effects of the attack. He's dimly aware of what's going on around him, but is too woozy and dazed to take any action or maintain any power. He can make a PER Roll to perceive something really important, but otherwise he cannot interact with the world; he can't move, Dodge, take any Actions, or do anything but take Recoveries.

If the character has been Knocked Out further (below -10 STUN), he's completely unconscious and has lost contact with the world around him — he's out cold. He falls down, unable to keep his feet at all. A character in this state of unconsciousness can be killed automatically as a Full Phase Action by any character with the means to do so (a Killing Attack or other powerful attack) who makes a successful Attack Roll against the unconscious character.

Regardless of how severely the character has been Knocked Out, he cannot do anything except take Recoveries. He can take his first Recovery on his next full Phase (unless he's deeply unconscious; see below) at the end of the Segment (after all other characters who have a Phase that Segment have acted). However, he cannot take a Recovery in the Segment in which he was Knocked Out, even if he had a Phase that Segment which had not yet been used. A character who's Knocked Out must take Recoveries every Phase (or as often as allowed to) until his STUN total is greater than zero. When his STUN total is positive, the character wakes up, and can take whatever Actions he wants to.

The body of an unconscious character puts its entire energy reserve into waking up. Because of this, when he wakes up, his END equals his current STUN total. (If a character is "awakened" from being Knocked Out due to the addition of STUN from Aid, Healing, or the like, his END equals his STUN total as established by the Aid/Healing or his END total at the time he was Knocked Out, whichever is less.)

Example: *Andarra was Knocked Out by a plant creature with a stun rod; she was reduced to -4 STUN. She has a REC of 7, so she'll have 3 STUN at the end of her next Phase. Since Andarra was Knocked Out, she awakens with the same END total as STUN, so she wakes up with only 3 END.*

A character who's both Stunned and Knocked Out by the same attack begins taking Recoveries in his next full Phase; he does not have to spend a Phase recovering from being Stunned (that's part of waking up from being Knocked Out).

A character act at full strength or power as soon as he Recovers from being Knocked Out — he doesn't have to act at partial strength or power for some period of time (though the amount of END he has, as described above, may restrict what he can do). The rules don't limit what a character can do once he's awake, other than restricting the amount of END he has to spend.

Taking Recoveries

A deeply unconscious character may not get a Recovery every Phase. It's up to the GM to determine what qualifies as "deeply unconscious" and how long it takes a character in that state to wake up. As a guideline, the GM can consult the Recovery Time Table for suggestions on how often a character should Recover.

A character can Recover one level better on the table if someone helps him by slapping his face, splashing water on him, or offering similar aid. Helping someone requires a Full Phase Action, and the unconscious character only gets the Recovery benefit as long as someone helps.

Typically, you should only use the guidelines in the Recovery Time Table for PCs, not NPCs. Once an NPC is Knocked Out below the -10 STUN level, even by a little, he should normally remain unconscious until the fight ends (unless it would be dramatically appropriate for him to wake up). Characters shouldn't have to keep hitting an unconscious opponent "just to make sure he won't wake up"; that's unheroic and undramatic. The GM shouldn't force them to do this by constantly having NPCs wake up and start fighting again.

RECOVERY TIME TABLE

STUN Total	How Often Character Recovers
-0 to -10	Every Phase and Post-Segment 12
-11 to -20	Post-Segment 12 only
-21 to -30	Once a minute only
-31 or more	GM's option (a long time)

Injury

Characters who take BODY damage suffer injuries — cuts, broken bones, wounds, and other such unpleasantries. While this may entail loss of blood, characters won't lose more BODY due to bleeding unless they are at or below 0 BODY (see below) or the GM uses the optional Bleeding rules (see page 123).

The exact nature of an injury depends upon the special effects of the attack that did the damage: fire causes horrendous burns; fists and clubs crush and smash; swords and knives cut; Energy Blasts inflict burns and disrupt tissue; bullets cause puncture wounds, tissue disruption, and hydrostatic shock. At the GM's discretion, this may have effects beyond loss of BODY; for example, a burned character might lose some points of Comeliness until healed.

Ordinarily, the loss of BODY, or dropping into the negative BODY range, doesn't affect a character's CV, Skill Rolls, or the like. However, the GM may apply any penalties he considers appropriate.

Breaking Limbs

Gamemasters may use the following optional rules in place of Impairing and Disabling rules (see pages 120-21) to determine whether an attack breaks a target's limbs.

Generally, a limb can take 1/3 of a character's starting BODY before being severed or breaking (or becoming so damaged or mangled as to be useless). Thus, it requires 3 BODY to break a normal person's arm; at the GM's discretion, 1-2 BODY might cause a minor fracture. If the GM is using the Hit Location Table, the limb must take 3 BODY after the BODYx from the Table is applied.

Usually you cannot do more than 1/3 of a character's BODY to him by attacking one of his limbs. If, for example, a barbarian PC uses his sword to cut off an enemy's arm, the enemy should take the 3 BODY necessary to cut off the arm, not the full BODY done by the attack (though you should calculate the STUN based on the full BODY). The injured character may pass out and bleed to death, or die of infection in a few days, but the loss of a limb in and of itself shouldn't kill him.

Example: *Sir Gareth uses his broadsword to attack a goblin. He hits his foe in the Arm (the GM is using the Hit Location Table) and does 12 BODY (and 24 STUN, per the Hit Location Table). Even after the goblin subtracts its 3 points of Resistant Defense and halves the damage due to the location, it still takes 5 BODY. The GM rules the goblin actually only suffers 3 BODY because Sir Gareth has hacked off its arm; the STUN damage is unaffected.*

Death

A character at or below 0 BODY is dying. He loses 1 BODY each Turn (at the end of Segment 12). This is usually referred to as "bleeding to death," though it doesn't necessarily involve loss of blood.

Death occurs when, either due to attacks or "bleeding to death," the character has lost twice his original BODY (*i.e.,* when he reaches a negative BODY score equal to his starting positive BODY).

Example: *If a character who normally has 10 BODY reaches -10 BODY, he dies. A character with a lower BODY, say 8, would only have to reach -8 BODY to die. If a character who normally has 10 BODY started the game with 6 BODY due to a previous injury, he still won't die until he reaches -10 BODY.*

This unpleasant fate is not inevitable. Another character can stabilize a character at 0 or negative BODY with a successful Paramedics roll (at -1 for every negative 2 BODY). This doesn't give the wounded character back any BODY, it just stabilizes his condition so he doesn't lose any more BODY. The GM should modify this number for circumstances. With good medical care, good food, rest, and warm and dry conditions, the character's chances are greatly improved (+1 to +3). Poor conditions, such as dirt, additional shocks, and extreme cold, would impose a -1 to -3 penalty. See also *Recovering BODY,* page 142.

OPTIONAL EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

The rules in this section are all optional. They add "realism" and depth to combat, but at the expense of slowing down the action and requiring more effort and time to resolve. It's a good idea to avoid using these rules if there are a lot of players (more than five or six). If you're just learning the game, then it's an even better idea to leave these optional rules for later.

WOUNDING

This option prevents characters from totally ignoring wounds. A character who takes BODY damage for any reason must make an EGO Roll at -1 for every full 2 BODY the character has taken.

If the roll succeeds, there's no effect beyond the damage normally done by the injury. If the roll fails, the character can't take any offensive action in his next Phase — he can't shoot, strike back, or use any offensive Combat Maneuver. He may still move to Concealment, Dodge, or use any other neutral or defensive Combat Maneuver. This simulates the instinctive response to being wounded (saying "ouch!", clutching the wound, and perhaps ducking back behind a wall).

This rule applies more to NPCs than to PCs. Player characters are assumed to be tough. Sometimes the NPCs don't have the drive or motivation the PCs have.

The GM should take care not to let Wounding interfere with the game. Wounding tends to come into play much more frequently than Disabling or Impairing, and therefore has a greater potential to disrupt or slow down the game. It also has a higher "frustration potential": most players can understand having to worry about massive wounds that Impair or Disable them, but no player likes to have his character "nickel-and-dimed" to death by taking a couple of BODY here, a couple of BODY there. Use the rule with discretion and dramatic sense, and it should work fine. Alternately, the GM can change the way the rule works — either just for the PCs (because they're the heroes, after all) or for everyone — to minimize its impact. For example, maybe the PCs only suffer a -1 to the EGO Roll for every 3 BODY damage taken, instead of every 2 BODY.

Characters can use Resistance to aid their EGO Roll when wounded (or buy an ability like *It Doesn't Hurt That Much* on *Dark Champions,* page 126).

HIT LOCATION

You can use the Hit Location optional rule to determine which part of a character's body is hit by a particular attack or blow. There are two ways to use Hit Location. First, GMs can just use the table to see where an attack hit the target, but not use the location to modify the damage taken. Thus, a blow to the head does the same amount of damage as a blow to the arm, and so forth. This gives combat some extra color, but does not actually affect it in the least. This is the recommended way to use Hit Locations in most Superheroic campaigns.

Second, for most Heroic campaigns, the GM might want to use the Hit Location Table to its full effect — that is, to help determine both the location of the attack *and* how much damage the attack does.

HIT LOCATIONS AND KILLING DAMAGE

To use the Hit Location Table for Killing Damage attacks, do the following after an attack hits:

1. *Determine where the attack hit:* Roll 3d6 and consult the first two columns of the Hit Location Table to find out where the attack struck the target.

2. *Roll the BODY damage:* Roll the dice to determine how much BODY damage the attack does.

3. *Determine STUN damage:* Multiply the BODY rolled by the STUNx for the location hit instead of rolling a STUN Multiplier. The result is the amount of STUN done to the target before his defenses are applied. Subtract the target's appropriate defenses to determine how much STUN he takes.

4. *Determine the BODY damage the target takes:* Subtract the target's appropriate Resistant Defense from the BODY of the attack to determine the BODY done. Then multiply that BODY total by the BODYx to find out how much BODY the target actually takes.

Example: *Arkelos hits a goblin (ED 5, DEF 3, BODY 15) with his Fire Blast spell (RKA 3d6). He rolls 3d6 to determine Hit Location and gets an 8 — the Arms. He rolls another 3d6 to determine the BODY damage for his spell and gets a 13. Consulting the STUNx column, he finds that the STUN Multiplier for the Arms is x2, so he does 26 STUN to the target. The goblin takes 18 of this after subtracting his defenses. Then the GM subtracts the goblin's 3 DEF from the BODY, leaving 10, which is multiplied by the x½ BODYx for the Arms, so the goblin takes 5 BODY (reduced to 3 because it's a limb wound; see Breaking Limbs, above). What was once an arm is now a charred stump.*

HIT LOCATIONS AND NORMAL DAMAGE

To use the Hit Location Table for Normal Damage attacks, do the following after an attack hits:

1. *Determine where the attack hit:* Roll 3d6 and consult the first two columns of the Hit Location Table to find out where the attack struck the target.

2. *Determine the STUN damage the target takes:* Roll the dice to determine how much STUN damage the attack does. Then apply the target's defenses. Multiply the amount of damage the target takes after applying his defenses by the modifier for that part of the body in the N STUN column.

3. *Determine the BODY damage the target takes:* Count the Normal Damage BODY as usual. Subtract the target's appropriate defenses from the BODY of the attack to determine how much BODY he takes. Then multiply that BODY total by the BODYx for that part of the body to find how much BODY the target actually takes.

"Vitals" is defined as any particularly delicate or vulnerable area on the body; this can include the groin, the heart, a large artery, or many other areas. The GM should choose whatever effect is most appropriate for the attack and the situation.

Attacks that have the *Area Of Effect* or *Explosion* Advantages, or that otherwise affect an entire area, use the standard Hit Location rules — the character rolls a Hit Location, and the GM applies the damage accordingly. The roll indicates the part of the target's body that's the most directly affected by the blast. Alternately, the GM can dispense with the Hit Location rules for Explosions and the like, and just apply the damage generally with a rolled STUN Multiplier.

HIT LOCATIONS AND BARRIERS

If the Hit Location rules are in use, and an attacker fires at a target who's protected by a Force Wall, an ordinary wall, or some other barrier, here's how you resolve the damage if the attack penetrates the barrier and affects the target.

For Killing Attacks, do this:

1. First, find out if the KA does enough BODY to penetrate the FW. If not, the issue of the STUN is moot.

2. If the KA gets through the FW, subtract the FW's defenses from the BODY done.

3. Apply the remaining BODY to the target normally using the Hit Location rules, and calculate STUN from it.

For a Normal Damage attack, subtract the Force Wall's defenses (and the character's other defenses) from the STUN rolled, then apply the NSTUN multiplier to the STUN damage the character actually takes after defenses.

HIT LOCATIONS AND VULNERABILITY

The *Vulnerability* Disadvantage interacts with the Hit Location rules as follows:

For Killing Damage, do the following:

1. Roll 3d6 to determine where the attack hit.

2. Roll the damage dice to determine how much BODY the attack does.

3. Use the STUNx multiplier to determine how much STUN the attack does.

3a. If the target has a Vulnerability that increases the STUN damage, apply it at this stage, after applying the STUNx multiplier. Then subtract the target's appropriate defenses to determine how much STUN damage he takes.

3b. If the target has applicable Damage Reduction, it now applies (after defenses are applied) to reduce the STUN damage.

4. If the target has a Vulnerability that increases the BODY damage, apply it at this stage, before applying defenses. Then subtract the target's appropriate Resistant Defenses to determine how much BODY damage he takes. Then apply the Hit Location's BODYx modifier to the BODY damage that gets past his defenses (if any).

4a. If the target has applicable Damage Reduction, it now applies to reduce the BODY damage.

For Normal Damage, do the following:

1. Roll 3d6 to determine where the attack hit.

2. Roll the damage dice to determine how much STUN the attack does.

3. If the target has a Vulnerability that increases the STUN damage, apply it at this stage, before applying defenses. Then subtract the target's appropriate defenses to determine how much STUN damage he takes. Then apply the Hit Location's N STUN modifier to the STUN damage that gets past his defenses (if any).

3a. If the target has applicable Damage Reduction, it now applies (after defenses are applied) to reduce the STUN damage.

4. Determine the Normal Damage BODY the attack does by the usual method. If the target has a Vulnerability that increases the BODY damage, apply it at this stage, before applying defenses. Then subtract the target's appropriate defenses to determine how much BODY damage he takes. Then apply the Hit Location's BODYx modifier to the BODY damage that gets past his defenses (if any).

4a. If the target has applicable Damage Reduction, it now applies (after defenses are applied) to reduce the BODY damage.

HIT LOCATION TABLE

3d6 Roll	Location	STUNx	N STUN	BODYx	To Hit
3-5	Head	x5	x2	x2	-8 OCV
6	Hands	x1	x½	x½	-6 OCV
7-8	Arms	x2	x½	x½	-5 OCV
9	Shoulders	x3	x1	x1	-5 OCV
10-11	Chest	x3	x1	x1	-3 OCV
12	Stomach	x4	x1½	x1	-7 OCV
13	Vitals	x4	x1½	x2	-8 OCV
14	Thighs	x2	x1	x1	-4 OCV
15-16	Legs	x2	x½	x½	-6 OCV
17-18	Feet	x1	x½	x½	-8 OCV

If necessary, roll 1d6 to determine left or right side (hands, arms, shoulders, thighs, legs, feet). If you roll a 1, 2, or 3, the left side is hit; if you roll a 4, 5, or 6, the right side is hit.

Other Hit Location Rules

Some GMs may wish to use the following additional rules regarding Hit Locations.

EXPANDING THE HIT LOCATION CHART

The accompanying text box lists some optional "new" Hit Locations. These are provided only for targeting purposes; they don't change the Hit Location chart itself.

ADDITIONAL HIT LOCATIONS

Location	STUNx	N STUN	BODYx	To Hit
Finger	x1	x½	x¼	-8
Eye*	x5	x2	x2½	-12
Knee/Elbow	x2	x1	x½	-7
Spine†	x3	x1	x1	-7
Neck/Throat‡	x5	x1	x2	-9

Notes

*: In many cases, even well-protected characters have little or no eye protection.

†: A hit to the spine from which the target takes BODY usually results in some sort of paralysis; the extent and duration of the paralysis depends on the wound. A character can only target the spine from behind.

‡: A hit to the throat usually causes loss of voice or similar problems in addition to any other damage it causes.

ADJUSTABLE HIT LOCATIONS

As an optional rule for campaigns that use the Hit Location rules, the GM can allow characters to adjust the location they rolled by up to 1 point (not one step, one point) up or down the Hit Location chart for each 1 point by which they make their Attack Rolls. In other words, an Attack Roll that succeeds by a large margin has a greater chance to hit a vulnerable spot, thus reflecting the degree of the character's success.

Example: *Renegade shoots at a bank robber. He needs a 13- to hit, and rolls a 10, making the roll by 3. Then he rolls on the Hit Location Table and gets an 11 — the Chest. Using this optional rule, he can adjust the 11 up or down by up to 1 point for each point he made the roll by (i.e., three points). So, he could take it up the chart to 10 (still the Chest), 9 (Shoulders), or 8 (Arms), or down the chart to 12 (Stomach), 13 (Vitals), or 14 (Thighs). He decides to go for the "good shot" and adjusts to 13 (Vitals) for the deadliest possible wound he can inflict.*

A character cannot adjust to a Hit Location that he can't perceive with a Targeting Sense or that's blocked from his line of fire by Concealment or the like.

INCREASING KILLING DAMAGE

Some *HERO System* GMs are concerned that Killing Damage weapons don't put victims down with even the spotty regularity of real-world weapons. The *HERO System* simulates dramatic, heroic action. That means characters can take a lot of damage and keep going. You can use the Impairing/Disabling rules to get around this, but those rules are a little complicated. Or you could change all the DCs for weapons, which takes time and effort.

As a simpler option for more "realistic" campaigns, try this instead: double the BODYx Column of the Hit Location Chart for Killing Damage attacks. With this approach, the Head and Vital locations have a BODYx multiple of x4, instead of x2, with Killing Damage only (Normal Damage would still use x2). Hands, Arms, Legs and Feet would be x1 instead of x½, and Shoulders, Chest, Stomach, and Thighs would be x2 instead of x1. This makes Killing Damage weapons much more fearsome.

This approach is not recommended for martial arts-oriented campaigns, but it is appropriate for gritty, "realistic" campaigns.

Placed Shots

You can also use the Hit Location Table to determine the OCV modifier for aiming at a particular part of the body. This is known as a "Placed Shot," "Called Shot," or "targeting."

Consult the *To Hit* column on the Hit Location Table to determine the OCV modifier for targeting a particular area. If a character makes an Attack Roll after applying the OCV modifier, his attack hits the area listed, doing the BODYx and STUNx listed; if he misses, the attack misses altogether. If applicable, the character can even choose the precise number he would have rolled on the Hit Location dice. (This can be important if the target has sectional defenses.)

At the GM's option, when a Placed Shot hits there may be additional effects based upon the special effects of the Power being used (for example, hitting someone in the face with a blast of fire may cause temporary or permanent blindness).

Examples: *Randall Irons wants to shoot Professor Wong in the Arms. He suffers a -5 on his OCV to hit, plus any other modifiers for Range, Concealment, and so on.*

Chiron is fighting an armored knight. Chiron aims at the knight's Head, which imposes a -8 OCV to Chiron's OCV. Amazingly, Chiron hits anyway. He can choose whether he hit location 3, 4, or 5. Since the knight has armor covering locations 3 and 4, Chiron chooses location 5, thereby avoiding the armor.

PLACED SHOTS AND SURPRISE

Whenever a target is Surprised out of combat (see *Combat Modifiers*), halve the Placed Shot modifiers. For instance, shooting at the head becomes a -4 OCV shot instead of a -8 OCV shot. The same applies to Stunned characters, and in some other situations (see the DCV Modifiers Table on page 37).

A character may place a weapon against some specific location on a completely immobile body as a Full Phase Action. He doesn't need to make an Attack Roll to hit the target in the specific location, and can hit that location as an Action which takes no time (consider this the equivalent of having the target Covered).

SPECIAL HIT LOCATIONS

Sometimes a character may want to take a Placed Shot at a group of areas on the target instead of just one area. Or perhaps the target is partly Concealed, and only certain areas of his body can be hit. In such circumstances, the attacker should use the Special Hit Location Table. This table lists the different general locations, the OCV modifier to hit those locations, and the dice roll to consult the main Hit Location Table.

Consult the Hit Location table normally. Use the number from the dice roll (indicated in the third column) as the number on the first column of the Hit Location Table.

SPECIAL HIT LOCATIONS

General Location	OCV	Dice Roll
Head Shot (Head-Shoulders)	-4	1d6+3
High Shot (Head-Vitals)	-2	2d6+1
Body Shot (Hands-Legs)	-1	2d6+4
Low Shot (Shoulders-Feet)	-2	2d6+7*
Leg Shot (Vitals-Feet)	-4	1d6+12

* Count 19 as Feet

Example: *Andarra (OCV 7) is shooting her blaster at some space pirates (DCV 4) who are using a bulkhead for Concealment; she can only see their heads and chests. Preferring not to hit the bulkhead, she opts for a High Shot (-2 OCV). She rolls an 8 and hits! A High Shot requires a 2d6+1 roll on the Hit Location Table, so she rolls a 2 and a 1 and adds 1, for a 4 — Head shot! One space pirate takes a blaster bolt between the eyes and falls dead.*

SECTIONAL DEFENSES

If the GM uses the Hit Location optional rule, then defenses can be sectional — that is, they can only protect certain Hit Locations. This can be used to reflect a steel cuirass or bullet-proof vest that only protects the Chest, a riot helmet that only protects the Head, and so forth. If the campaign allows for sectional defenses, characters should keep track of how much armor they have for each location (if any). The defense against an attack depends on the armor covering the location where the attack hit.

Example: *Andarra has bought a vest of reflective armor which provides 5 points of ED Armor to protect herself against lasers and the like. The vest covers the Chest, Stomach, and Vitals, so it protects Locations 10-13 on the table. This defense applies against any Energy Attack that strikes these locations; the armor has no effect on attacks which hit her in other Locations.*

Sectional defenses are most appropriate for Heroic campaigns. If the GM wants to use this option in a Superheroic campaign, he has two options. First, he can simply use the Power Limitation *Activation Roll*; this simulates defenses that don't always protect their user. Second, if he would like to use the Hit Location rules, then he should use Activation Roll to determine the Limitation for the sectional defense. Refer to the Armor Coverage Table, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 488, for details and examples.

Impairing

You can use this optional rule in conjunction with the Hit Location optional rule.

Whenever the BODY damage done to an area (before or after the BODYx) is more than half the character's total BODY, that area is Impaired. Consult the Impairment Table to determine the effects of Impairment on different parts of the body, and how long those effects last. The Impairment effect for head and torso areas

IMPAIRING EFFECTS

1d6	Time Impairment Lasts
1	1 turn
2	1 minute
3	5 minutes
4	1 hour
5	5 hours
6	1 day

HEAD: The character may become unconscious (GM's discretion), and upon waking could suffer from temporary amnesia, dizziness, double vision, or impaired speech. The GM could apply a -1 to -3 penalty on the character's CV, Perception, and Skill Rolls to reflect this.

The GM may also decide that an NPC who has taken an Impairing shot to the Head is dead, dying, or at the very least out of the fight. This is a good tool for getting unimportant ruffians out of the way. Used wisely, this rule can add to the drama of an adventure. Player characters should almost never die from an Impairing blow to the head.

HANDS, ARMS, AND SHOULDERS: The character loses the ability to perform delicate actions with that hand. He suffers a -3 OCV for any attacks using that arm, and -3 to any Skill Rolls involving that hand or arm. Striking someone with that arm causes the character to take 2d6 STUN, no defense.

CHEST, STOMACH, AND VITALS: The character no longer receives his Post-Segment 12 Recoveries. An Impairing shot to the Vitals may leave an NPC dead or dying, in the GM's discretion (as for Head wounds).

THIGHS, LEGS, AND FEET: Halve the character's Running. The character is -2 DCV because of his reduced mobility.

should only occur if the character fails to make a CON Roll, or at the GM's discretion.

These effects are optional. The GM should use his judgment, with due regard for the nature of the attack that caused the wound and the situation. Sometimes applying these effects strictly is not the way to have the most fun. Feel free to alter the effects according to specific circumstances.

Each part of the body is listed, and possible effects of Impairment are discussed after each listing. If a character suffers multiple Impairing wounds that impose penalties on him, those penalties are cumulative.

Disabling

You can use this optional rule in conjunction with the Hit Location optional rule.

Whenever the BODY damage done to an area (before or after the BODYx) is more than the character's total BODY, that area is Disabled. Consult the text below to determine the effects of a Disabling wound on different parts of the body.

The Disabling effects should occur at the GM's discretion. Generally, unimportant ruffians and NPCs could be considered dead for the sake of faster game play. Player characters should receive the benefit of the doubt — after all, they're the focus of the campaign.

DISABLING EFFECTS

HEAD: The character will probably suffer a long term effect such as amnesia, impaired speech, partial paralysis, hearing loss, or impaired vision. The GM may decide to reduce some Characteristics such as INT, EGO, or COM to reflect this. Roll 1d6 on the Head Disabling Table to determine the type of damage. This could be a useful plot twist. Perhaps the character forgets who his enemies are!

HEAD DISABLING TABLE

1d6	Effect
1	Lose 1d6 EGO
2	Lose 1d6 INT (amnesia, impaired speech)
3	Lose 1d6 COM
4	-½d6 to Perception Rolls (hearing or vision loss)
5	-½d6 to all Skill Rolls
6	Limb paralyzed (see next listing)

HANDS, ARMS, AND SHOULDERS: The character may have -1d6 STR or DEX in that limb, or it may be totally severed depending upon the nature of the attack and the GM's judgment. If the GM rules that the limb remains attached, the character may try to make a CON Roll. If he fails the roll, the limb is permanently impaired, with the same effects as Impairment. A character who makes a CON Roll can retrain the arm to normal with several months of therapy (and possibly paying Character Points).

CHEST, STOMACH, AND VITALS: Long term effects may include the loss of various Characteristics. Roll on the Chest Disabling Table.

CHEST DISABLING TABLE

1d6	Effect
1	Lose 1d6 STR
2	Lose 1d6 CON
3	Lose ½d6 BODY
4	Lose ½d6 REC
5	Lose 2d6 END
6	Lose 1d6 STUN

THIGHS, LEGS, AND FEET: The character may have decreased movement and/or a distinctive limp. The limb may be totally severed, depending on the nature of the attack and the GM's judgement. If the limb is considered to be still attached, the character may try to make a CON Roll. If the character fails the roll, the limb will be permanently impaired, with the same effects as Impairment. A character who makes a CON Roll can retrain the limb to normal with several months of therapy (and possibly paying Character Points).

If the character makes a CON Roll, the long term effects of a Disabling wound should be less severe, and possibly only temporary in nature (roll on the Impairment Table). A character who fails a CON Roll may have to buy back any lost Characteristics, movement, or Perception at the regular campaign price, depending on the GM.

Disabling effects can create story ideas. The roleplaying possibilities are legion for characters who are suddenly blinded, lose an arm, or become paralyzed. But don't spoil the players' fun by applying the rules in a rigid manner — it's not every player who wants to try to roleplay a blinded character, after all. Technology or magic can often fix any disability a character has. Cybernetic replace-

IMPAIRING/ DISABLING AND INNATE POWERS

If the campaign uses the Impairing/Disabling rules, then an attack made with an Impaired/ Disabled arm or hand, whether it's an innate power or a weapon, suffers the appropriate penalty, while attacks made with other parts of the body (head, legs, and the like) do not. An attack made with another part of the body — such as energy beams projected from the eyes or the chest — suffers no Impairing/Disabling effect. On the other hand, if a character with eyebeams takes an Impairing/Disabling wound to the head, that might prevent him from using his power, while a character with hand-fired energy beams could still attack in that situation. The GM should interpret the situation in light of common sense, dramatic sense, and consideration for game balance.

ments might be used, or a new body part regrown, depending on the campaign.

Each part of the body is listed in the accompanying box with possible Disabling effects.

DISABLING IN "LOW HEALING" CAMPAIGNS

Unlike the more merciful Impairing rules, the Disabling rules have the potential to be more dangerous in genres where rapid, easy methods of healing or repairing the body are unavailable. That means a Disabling wound can easily become a permanent facet of a character, and this may ruin a player's fun.

But there are ways to avoid this unpleasant fate. First, as noted in the rulebook, if a character makes a CON Roll, the Disabling effects he suffers should be less severe, or even temporary (convert them to Impairments instead). Second, the GM could rule that characters with access to immediate medical attention (such as another PC who knows Paramedics) who get treatment quickly suffer an Impairment effect instead of a Disabling one. Third, the GM could grant Disabled characters extra Experience Points they can only use to buy back Characteristics and abilities lost to Disabling wounds. The GM should do this gradually, over many game sessions — but eventually, a Disabled PC will be back to full strength.

If possible, don't let a character suffer from more than one Disabling wound at a time. The GM should let him to heal before severely injuring him again. After all, few players want to play characters who are always walking wounded.

KNOCKDOWN

Weapons, especially big ones, can knock people down; so can powerful attacks of just about any kind. This is simulated by Knockdown, an optional rule used with the Hit Location Table. Whenever a character takes an Impairing wound, he must retreat one hex and make a DEX Roll. If he fails the roll, he falls down. Whenever he takes a Disabling wound, he's automatically Knocked Down, and falls back one hex for every 2 BODY rolled on the dice over the character's starting BODY (*i.e.,* the amount of BODY he has when fully healed, such as 10 BODY for a normal human). A Knocked Down character must use a Half Phase Action to get to his feet (if he was in midair or midwater, he must spend a Half Phase reorienting himself).

Example: *A gigantic alien with a blaster (RKA 3d6) does 14 BODY to Andarra, who only has 10 BODY. Andarra is Knocked Down and goes flying back two hexes.*

Knockdown is recommended only for use in Heroic campaigns. Superheroic campaigns should use Knockback (see below).

At the GM's option, characters might suffer Knockdown not only when they suffer an Impairing or Disabling wound, but whenever they would ordinarily suffer Knockback (*i.e.,* roll as if rolling for Knockback; if any Knockback results, the char-

acter suffers Knockdown). Also at the GM's option, characters can convert the *Does Knockback* (+¼) Advantage into *Does Knockdown* — any hit from a weapon with this Advantage automatically does Knockdown, even if it inflicts no STUN or BODY damage past the target's defenses.

BLEEDING

When this optional rule is used, characters may continue to take damage from blood loss after they suffer an injury. Among other uses, this rule allows the GM to have NPCs bleed to death if untended (which is sometimes useful for plot purposes). In situations where a character can get immediate medical care, there's no need to use the Bleeding rules. Generally, you should use Bleeding when a character gets injured, but still wants to keep going.

Whenever a character loses BODY, he will Bleed, thus losing STUN and occasionally some extra BODY. The Bleeding Table lists how much damage characters take from Bleeding. The column *Number of Dice/Turn* is the number of dice of STUN the wounded character takes per Turn. Wounded characters should roll the dice on Segment 1 of each Turn. The STUN lost from Bleeding may be Recovered normally (see *Recovery*). Whenever the character rolls a six on any of the dice, he loses an additional 1 BODY. This may cause the character to Bleed faster. However, the maximum BODY lost from bleeding is 1 BODY per Turn, even if several sixes are rolled.

Thus, a character who has lost 3 BODY due to a wound would lose 1d6 STUN every Turn.

There is a chance Bleeding will stop of its own accord. The character must be unconscious or resting for a full Turn — he cannot engage in any type of combat or perform any Action which takes a Half Phase or Full Phase in any Segment of that Turn. If he meets these conditions, the Bleeding stops if he rolls a number in the range shown in the *Stop Bleeding* column on his Bleeding dice. Characters still take the indicated STUN damage in the Turn the Bleeding stops.

Characters with Paramedics (an Everyman Skill) may attempt to stop Bleeding. Appropriate tools (bandages, pressure packs, antiseptics) can add up to +3 to the roll, as can taking additional time. Extremely poor conditions or medical techniques ("bleeding's good for you") may warrant a penalty (-1 to -3). The Bleeding stops if the character succeeds with a Paramedic roll, per the rules in the section *Death,* above.

BLEEDING TABLE

BODY Lost	Number of Dice/Turn	Stop Bleeding
1-5	1d6	1
6-10	2d6	2-5
11-15	3d6	3-9
16-20	4d6	4-13
21-25	5d6	5-17
26 or more	6d6	6-21

Wounds that have stopped Bleeding may reopen if the character exerts himself. The GM should check on Segment 1 if the character used his STR or made a Full Move at any time during the previous Turn. If the GM rolls less than (9 + (number of dice character would Bleed) - (amount Paramedics roll was made by, if Paramedics was used to stop the Bleeding)), the wound reopens and the character begins Bleeding again.

Example: *Andarra has lost 6 BODY. She will lose 2d6 STUN per Turn from Bleeding. Andarra stops to rest. On Segment 1, she rolls the 2d6 and gets a 2 and a 1, totaling 3 STUN lost. Because she did not exert herself, and rolled within the numbers listed under the Stop Bleeding column, she stops Bleeding.*

Andarra finishes resting and runs toward an enemy's spaceship. To check to see if her wound reopens, she rolls 3d6. She rolls a 13. Since the chance for her wound to reopen was (9 + 2) = 11 or less, she does not start Bleeding again.

Blunt weapons or Normal Damage (from any kind of attack) are less likely to induce Bleeding. Such damage is considered to be -1 level on the Bleeding table. Thus, a character who has taken up to 5 BODY from only Normal Damage will not bleed; at 6-10 BODY, he'll take 1d6 per Phase; and so on.

Healing Regeneration and similar abilities have no effect on Bleeding; characters with those abilities Bleed normally.

KNOCKBACK

In some types of combat, characters deliver such mighty blows that the combatants get knocked all over the battlefield. To reflect this, characters can do *Knockback* (KB). Knockback is most appropriate for Superheroic campaigns; Heroic campaigns generally should use Knockdown (see above) instead.

Of course, not all attacks do Knockback. You should limit Knockback to attacks that do damage by directly striking the target — for example, punches, Energy Blasts, Killing Attacks, and the like. Attacks that don't damage the target through direct force do not do Knockback. This second category typically includes Powers such as Drain, Transfer, Flash, and Transform.

Since the amount of Knockback a character takes depends upon the BODY damage rolled for an attack that hits him (see below), attacks that don't inflict BODY damage (such as Ego Attacks and Attack Powers bought with the *NND* and *AVLD* Advantages) usually don't cause Knockback. However, characters can buy them, or any other Power that doesn't do BODY, with the Advantage *Does Knockback.* In this case, count the "Normal Damage BODY" the Power would do if it were a Normal Damage attack, and use that to determine the Knockback.

DETERMINING KNOCKBACK

To determine how much Knockback a character suffers from being hit, the attacker rolls 2d6 and subtracts the total from the amount of BODY rolled for the attack. Use the total amount of BODY rolled on the attack dice, regardless of the target's defenses, how much damage the character takes after applying defenses, Vulnerabilities, Hit Location modifiers, or the like. The one exception is if the damage has to first penetrate a barrier, such as a wall or Force Wall. In that case, base the Knockback on the BODY damage that gets through the barrier; if none gets through, there's no Knockback. (If some does get through, the amount that gets through would be doubled for Double Knockback purposes.)

If the result is negative, no Knockback occurs — the defender remains where he was standing before the attack.

If the result is 0, the defender is Knocked Down. A character who is Knocked Down must spend a Half Phase in his next Phase getting to his feet (or reorient himself if he were in mid-air or mid-water).

If the result is positive, the target is Knocked Back that many inches. He ends up lying on the ground (or imbedded in a wall or other object), and must spend a Half Phase to get up (or getting out of whatever he hit).

If a character is hit by an Autofire attack that does Knockback, the Knockback equals the highest Knockback rolled for any of the attacks that hit, +1" for each additional attack that hit. (The Knockback doesn't protect the character from being hit by any of the Autofire hits.) For multiple-power attacks, and Rapid Fire and Sweep used to hit a single target multiple times, roll the Knockback separately for each hit, and use only the highest result.

If a character has a power that has the *Does Knockback* Advantage but doesn't roll damage (such as Darkness), the GM can use whatever method he feels is appropriate and won't slow the game down to determine the "Normal Damage BODY" for purposes of calculating Knockback. Some possibilities include: rolling 1d6 per 5 or 10 Active Points and counting the "Normal Damage BODY"; using a flat 1 BODY per 5 or 10 Active Points; or using a defined number of dice or BODY per increment of the power (such as, say, 2 BODY per 1" of Darkness).

If a single attack affects multiple targets (as with, for example, an Area Of Effect attack or an Explosion), and those targets have different Knockback modifiers, roll Knockback for each target separately.

Modifying The Number Of Knockback Dice

Certain situations modify the number of d6 rolled to determine Knockback. The Knockback Modifiers Table lists the different situations and the modifier to the 2d6 normally rolled (the modifiers are cumulative). For instance, if the target were flying, the GM would only roll 1d6 to determine Knockback; if he were underwater, the GM would roll 3d6. If the attacker used a Killing Strike (a Killing Damage attack and a Martial Maneuver) on an underwater opponent, the attacker would subtract a grand total of 5d6 from his BODY to determine Knockback. Shrinking, Density Increase, Growth, and Knockback Resistance also affect the total Knockback a character takes. The GM can add other modifiers as he sees fit.

KNOCKBACK MODIFIERS

Circumstance	Number of dice rolled for Knockback
Target is in the air	-1d6
Target Rolled with the Punch	-1d6
Target is underwater	+1d6
Attack was a Killing Damage attack	+1d6
Attack was a Martial Maneuver	+1d6
Target is using Clinging	+1d6
Target is in zero gravity	-1d6

Example: *Howler hits Green Dragon with an Energy Blast, doing 31 STUN and 9 BODY worth of damage. Howler gets a 5 on her 2d6 Knockback roll. Green Dragon is Knocked Back away from Howler 9 - 5 = 4" into a wall. He takes 4d6 damage.*

In his next Phase, Green Dragon succeeds with a Breakfall roll and gets to his feet as a Zero Phase Action. He Half Moves to Howler and hits her with a Martial Kick for 29 STUN and 8 BODY damage. He rolls a total of 2d6 (2d6 -1d6 because Howler is flying +1d6 because he used a Martial Maneuver) and gets a 10. Since 8 - 10 = -2, Howler isn't Knocked Back at all.

Increasing Knockback

In some types of campaigns, such as *Ninja Hero* games based on Japanese anime, attacks often do tremendous amounts of Knockback — much more than characters normally do with the regular *HERO System* rules. If the GM wants more free-wheeling combat in the campaign, with lots of Knockback, he can do several things. First, he can roll fewer dice — 1d6 instead of the standard 2d6. Second, he can ignore many of the modifiers that decrease Knockback, such as the +1d6 for using Martial Maneuvers. Third, he can encourage characters to add the *Double Knockback* Advantage to their attacks by reducing its value, or even allowing characters to buy it for a large group of attacks at once (see page 105 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* for rules for doing this to Martial Maneuvers)

Lastly, the GM can work with a player to decide that a particular maneuver *always* does a set amount of Knockback (no roll necessary). This "free Knockback" usually shouldn't exceed 3-5", but it's up to each GM to determine what's appropriate and balanced for his campaign.

KNOCKBACK DAMAGE

Knockback can damage a target. A character who is Knocked Back into a wall (or other upright structure) takes 1d6 Normal Damage for every 1" of Knockback taken (though the durability of the wall may limit how much damage he takes; see below). For instance, a character Knocked Back 6" into a wall takes 6d6 damage. A character Knocked

Back into another character damages himself and the character he hits; both characters take 1d6 damage per 1" of Knockback.

To determine if a character hits a structure or other large object when he's Knocked Back, the GM simply needs to know which direction he's moving (*i.e.,* opposite the direction from which the attack came) and what's in his way. If the structure or object is big enough, he'll hit it automatically. If it's small or narrow (for example, a tree or another character), the character who did the Knockback damage should make an Attack Roll using his base CV (calculated only from DEX, with no CSLs or other modifiers added) to see if he Knocked the target Back into the object. Use the Target Size rules to determine the structure's or object's DCV. Success indicates he did; failure indicates the target misses the object.

If a character hits a structure or other large object, both he and the structure take damage. Regardless of the amount of Knockback rolled, the most dice of Knockback damage a character can take when he hits a structure equals the DEF + BODY of the structure. If he's Knocked Back for more inches than the structure has DEF + BODY, he takes DEF + BODY dice of damage, the structure (or part thereof) shatters, and he continues through the hole. For every DEF + BODY total worth of structure a character is Knocked Back through, he flies back 1" less. (See *Breaking Things, HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 447).

Example: *Mechanon is Knocked Back 11" by an attack. Two inches behind Mechanon is a 6 DEF, 2 BODY wall. Mechanon flies back 2" and smashes through the wall (because he's been Knocked Back further than 8 [the structure's DEF + BODY]). Mechanon takes 8d6 damage (6 DEF + 2 BODY = 8d6 Knockback damage), blows through the wall, and continues 11-2-8 = 1" more.*

Suppose that the wall was 6 DEF, 6 BODY instead. In that case Mechanon would take 11d6 damage from hitting it, and would not shatter it and keep moving — its BODY + DEF exceeds the inches of Knockback he took.

If a character who has been Knocked Back does not impact a structure or other large upright surface, he simply hits the ground. He takes 1d6 damage for every 2" he was Knocked Back — half the damage of hitting an object.

A character may take less Knockback damage if he hits something soft, or more damage if he hits something with jagged edges. If he hits something particularly sharp, the GM can convert the damage to Killing Damage of an equal Damage Class.

Knockback damage is not limited to the amount of dice or damage rolled for the attack that caused the Knockback. It's entirely possible for the Knockback from an attack to do more damage than the attack itself does.

Distance traveled does not reduce Knockback damage. For Knockback purposes, there's no "deceleration" or the like. A character impacting an object takes his full Knockback damage whether he hits it after traveling 1", 8", or any other amount.

KNOCKBACK DAMAGE SUMMARY

The damage from Knockback depends on two factors: number of inches of Knockback taken and objects impacted.

1. If the inches of Knockback taken are greater than the DEF + BODY of the object impacted, the number of dice rolled for Knockback damage equals the DEF + BODY (and the character keeps moving backward as described in the text).

2. If the inches of Knockback taken are equal to or less than the DEF + BODY of the object impacted, the number of dice rolled for Knockback damage equals the inches taken.

3. If the character doesn't hit an object (*i.e.,* he hits the ground when he's Knocked Back horizontally), the number of dice rolled for Knockback damage equals half the inches taken.

Downward Knockback

An attacker can, if he chooses, Knock an opponent downward into the earth. He can only do this in HTH Combat, or in Ranged Combat if he can get above his target. To use this option, the attacker must declare his intention before he attacks. He then attacks and rolls Knockback normally. If he rolls any Knockback, the character is knocked prone in his hex. In addition, the character takes 1d6 damage for every 2" of Knockback rolled (if he's attacked directly from above, the GM should treat the ground as a "structure" and have the character take 1d6 per 1" of Knockback). A character who takes downward Knockback can use Breakfall to stay on his feet and avoid the Knockback damage.

Aerial And Upward Knockback

A character who's in the air and suffers Knockback typically takes the Knockback damage (if he hits something), not falling damage. However, the GM may, in the interest of common sense and dramatic sense, apply falling damage instead. This makes the most sense when the character falls a long way (particularly if he's also Stunned or Knocked Out). If the character's so high up in the air that he hits nothing, either due to Knockback or because he's able to right himself and fly under his own power before hitting the ground, he takes no damage at all.

If a character takes Knockback in an upward direction (perhaps after being uppercutted by an attacker smaller than he), the inches traveled aren't halved (as they would be for a character using Flight to move straight upward). Calculate the inches traveled using the standard rules. Unless the character happens to hit an object mid-air, he takes no Knockback damage from flying through the air this way, since he doesn't impact anything (even the ground).

Other Effects

Being Knocked Back does not affect the CV bonuses a character gains from using a particular maneuver. For example, a character using Martial Strike or Dodge retains the DCV bonus he gets from that maneuver even if he's Knocked Back. Nor does being Knocked Back eliminate the DCV penalty from maneuvers like Sweep.

Knockback does not cancel out or reduce velocity *per se.* However, since the victim of Knockback is "knocked off his feet," taking Knockback stops him from continuing to move until he gets to his feet again. (If he makes a Breakfall roll to stay on his feet, he continues moving at his current velocity in his next Phase, unless he chooses to slow down or stop using the standard rules for doing so.)

DIRECTED AND RANDOM KNOCKBACK

If a character is Knocked Back through or into a hex where there's another character, he's assumed to miss the other character. If the attacking character is trying to hit the other character with the Knockback victim, use the following rules.

Sometimes a character wants to aim his attack so that the Knockback the attack causes propels the target into a third character, thus causing both of those foes to suffer the Knockback damage. To do this, the character must do Knockback with his attack against the first target — enough Knockback that he could reach, and hit, the second target. If so, the character must make an Attack Roll using only his base OCV (as calculated from DEX, without Combat Skill Levels, maneuver bonuses, or the like) against the second target's DCV. If that roll succeeds, the first target hits the second target, and they both take 1d6 damage per 1" of Knockback.

With some types of attacks (for example, a whirlwind created by an air-manipulating character), the direction of the Knockback is random — it doesn't have any relation to the direction the attack came from. To represent this, a character can take a -0 Limitation, *Random Knockback.* Alternately, the GM may allow a character to take a -0 Limitation, *Variant Knockback,* and define an attack as always doing Knockback in a particular direction other than straight away from the character.

REDUCING KNOCKBACK

Characters have several ways to reduce or eliminate Knockback (see also page 78 regarding Pulling A Punch).

Knockback And Mass

Characters or objects that are lighter or heavier than normal ("normal" being 100 kilograms) often take more or less Knockback.

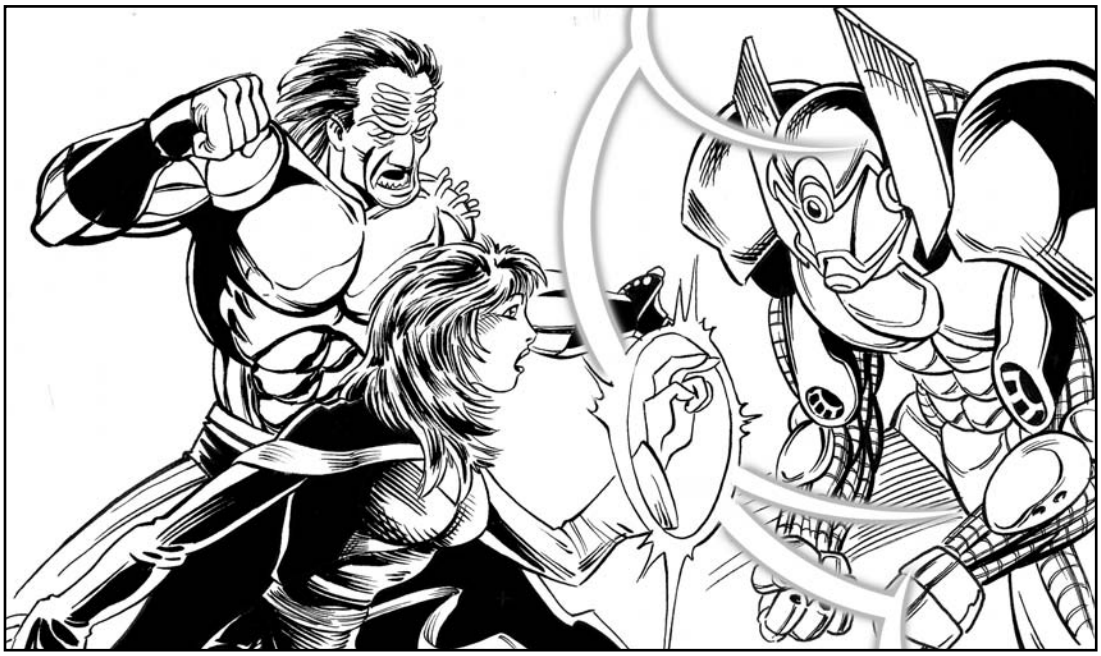
For every 2x mass, a character takes -1" Knockback. Thus, a character who weighs 400 kilograms takes -2" KB. The Density Increase Table and Vehicle Size Table, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* pages 146 and 463, provide easy references for increased mass.

For every ½ mass, a character takes +1" of Knockback. Since a character's weight decreases to 1/8 normal for every halving of his height, every level of Shrinking causes a character to take +3" Knockback (see the Shrinking Table, *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 218).

These and other modifiers don't affect the damage done by the Knockback, just the distance (although this might change the likelihood of the character hitting a structure). (On the other hand, the Power *Knockback Resistance* reduces both the distance and the damage, and the reduction of Knockback gained from Density Increase functions similarly.) For example, if a character who massed 800 kg was Knocked Back 10" by an attack, he'd only go back 7"; but if he hit a wall at that point, he'd take 10d6 of damage.

Knockback And Breakfall

A character who's not unconscious or Stunned may attempt a Breakfall roll at -1 per 2" of Knockback to avoid taking damage from Knockback. If the roll succeeds, the character takes no damage. He also lands on his feet, so he doesn't have to waste a Half Phase Action to re-orient himself. Breakfall doesn't help a character who hits a wall or other object, however.



PUSHBACK

Pushback is a character's ability to shove an opponent away from him. In some cases he does this to put some space between himself and his foe, but sometimes it has other advantages (such as slamming an opponent into a wall or knocking him off a roof).

To use Pushback, a player trades damage for the possibility of doing additional Knockback. The player declares his desire to have his character make a Pushback attack instead of a regular attack. If the attack hits, the player decides how much damage to trade off. For every 1 DC sacrificed, the attack does +2 BODY solely for purposes of calculating Knockback. Visually, the character may use an attack to "throw" an opponent away from him, or project *ch'i* into an enemy to force him away.

> **Example:** *Two karateka, Maeda and Egami, are fighting on a bridge over a deep gorge. Maeda Throws Egami, injuring him and putting him near the edge of the bridge. Egami decides to fake a serious injury rather than get to his feet and risk being knocked off of the bridge by Maeda's next attack. He makes his Acting roll by 3; Maeda misses his PER Roll and falls into Egami's trap. Maeda leaps at Egami, planning to knock him off the edge. Egami tries a Pushback attack to move Maeda far enough away from him that he can get up and move away from the edge before Maeda's next attack. He uses his 10d6 side kick and decides to sacrifice 5 DC for +10 BODY for Knockback purposes. He hits Maeda and rolls 5d6 for damage: 17 STUN and 5 BODY. For purposes of Knockback, this means 15 BODY. The Knockback roll comes up 9, and Maeda goes flying back 6". The GM explains that Egami got his foot in the pit of Maeda's stomach and shoved him away. Unfortunately for Maeda, the bridge is only 4" wide....*

Gamemasters should only adopt this rule if it's appropriate and useful in the campaign. In some games it may have the effect of making the Shove maneuver and the *Double Knockback* Advantage effectively useless.

Resisting Knockback

A character can use his STR or Flight (if he has it) to resist Knockback. In either case, he must declare in advance of an attack that he's resisting Knockback. Doing so is a Half Phase Action and halves his DCV. A character may Abort to resist Knockback.

Any character can use his STR to prevent Knockback from a given direction (if he's hit from an unexpected direction, he takes normal Knockback). This requires a reasonably stable ground surface for the character to "dig in." Each 5 points of STR reduces the Knockback by 1".

A character with Flight may declare that he's using part of his Flight to root himself to a single spot (or to remain at a specific location in mid-air, if he's already flying). For every 1" of Flight used to stabilize him, he takes -1" of Knockback. He must declare which direction he's bracing against. If he's hit from an unexpected direction, he takes normal Knockback.

If a character attempting to resist Knockback takes Knockback despite his efforts, he takes full Knockback, just as if he'd done nothing.

Here are some additional rules regarding damage that may be appropriate for some campaigns.

OTHER DAMAGE EFFECTS

CRITICAL HITS

Warning: These critical hits rules, if added to a campaign, make combat more dangerous and unbalancing. The GM should only add them to his campaign if he wants unpredictable and lethal combats.

A "critical hit" is a blow so accurate it does maximum damage. One occurs when a character's roll to hit is less than half of what he needed to hit the target.

Examples: *An OCV 6 character shoots at a DCV 5 character. He needs a 12 or less to hit. To make a critical hit, he needs less than a (12/2) 6 to hit* — i.e., *he must roll a 5 or below.*

An OCV 7 character attacks a DCV 5 character. He needs a 13 or less to hit. To make a critical hit, he needs less than a (13/2) 6.5 to hit — he must roll a 6 or less.

If a character makes a critical hit, he does maximum damage for the attack. Therefore, a Killing Attack 2d6 does 12 BODY. An 8d6 Normal Damage attack does 48 STUN, 16 BODY. A 2d6 NND attack does 12 STUN.

If the campaign uses the Hit Location rules, a Killing Attack uses the normal STUN Multiplier for the location — 12 BODY to the Vitals does 48 STUN, for instance. If those rules are not in use, a Killing Attack does the maximum possible STUN; if the STUN Multiplier is 1d6-1, as with most Killing Attacks, then 12 BODY corresponds to 60 STUN.

Characters may only do critical hits to living targets. Ignore critical hit results against targets like doors and walls (it would be far too easy to get a critical hit on a DCV 0 door, for instance).

FUMBLES

Related to critical hits are fumbles — disastrous occurrences that sometimes afflict combatants. After all, if characters can score high levels of success with excellent rolls, as a balancing factor they should suffer some problem if they roll very poorly.

Any roll of 18 on an Attack Roll constitutes a fumble (a fumble should also occur if the character ever gets a 1 on any of his Unluck dice rolled during combat). If you want fumbles to occur more frequently, set a threshold based on how badly the attacker misses. For example, perhaps any attack that rolls an 18 *or* misses by 4 or more results in a fumble.

The GM determines the exact effects of a fumble. Some possibilities include:

—the character suffers a reduced DCV (maybe even half DCV) until his next Phase

—the character loses his weapon: it slips from his grasp and goes flying into the street, it jams so badly it needs out-of-combat repairs, it breaks, or the like

—the character may hit one of his friends; he must make an attack at his base OCV against the friend's DCV (a Surprised penalty may apply)

—the character stumbles and falls, suffering penalties for being prone until his next Phase

MYSTERY DAMAGE

This is an option which only works for GMs willing to keep track of more details in combat. It's not recommended for any GM unless he likes being the one to keep track of character damage, or has a special reason in a one-shot game to keep his players off-balance.

In real life, a person cannot suffer an injury and know "Ah-ha, I've taken 4 BODY, it hurts but I'm not in any danger yet." He just knows he's hurt, and may have some vague idea of the wound's severity, but can't be confident in his ability to shrug it off.

If you want to simulate this in the game, the GM himself must keep track of all BODY damage done by Killing Attacks; he can let the players keep track of their own STUN damage from Killing Attacks, and of STUN and BODY damage from Normal Damage attacks. He'll have to know how much BODY the characters start with, and their Resistant Defenses (and what parts of the body they protect). He must make sure the players tell him about any BODY their characters take from Normal Damage attacks, and must record that BODY with the Killing Damage they're taking.

MYSTERY DAMAGE WITHOUT HIT LOCATIONS

Whenever an NPC hits a PC with a Killing Attack, the GM rolls the damage, rolls the STUN Multiplier, and announces something like this: "Ed, he's stabbed you in the chest, right below the ribs. It hurts a lot: take 12 STUN."

Now, Ed knows only that it "hurts a lot" from the STUN total he took; he doesn't know how bad the injury is. He doesn't know if the GM rolled 3 BODY and a 4x STUN Multiplier; perhaps it was 6 BODY and a 2x STUN Multiplier; maybe it was

2 BODY and a 6x STUN Multiplier (from the *Increased STUN Multiplier* Advantage) or even 12 BODY and a 1x STUN Multiplier.

To get an idea of how bad the wound is, he must use a Half Phase Action to look at it. At that point, the GM should say nothing more than: "It looks shallow," or "It looks deep but you've had worse," or "It's deep and nasty-looking." Thus, characters won't know when they're mortally wounded, though the GM can tell them how they're bleeding like stuck pigs and swiftly growing weaker and weaker.

MYSTERY DAMAGE WITH HIT LOCATIONS

When you use Hit Locations in your game, mystery damage becomes a bit more complicated. A character who's stabbed in the stomach and takes 12 STUN automatically knows he took 3 BODY. Therefore, in campaigns using Hit Locations, you have to do things a little differently.

In this sort of campaign, you don't just use the STUNx column from the Hit Location chart. You use that column, but also make two quick rolls. First, make a 1d6 roll for subtract/add: a 1-3 means subtract, and a 4-6 means add. Second, roll 2d6 to determine how much STUN to add or subtract to the STUN done by the attack.

Alternately, the GM can simply keep track of the STUN of the attack, along with the BODY.

STUN DAMAGE IN HEROIC CAMPAIGNS

The *HERO System* rules reflect "dramatic reality" — the "reality" depicted in genre novels, movies, comic books, and television shows. This has many implications for Heroic game play, such as the fact that it's easier to knock an enemy out than to kill him.

One of the most important aspects of dramatic reality is this: heroes don't die. They may get beaten, battered, bruised, and even crippled, but they don't die. They're a hardy bunch — and they've got to be, considering the opposition they face and the fact that they're on "center stage" throughout the entire story. The *HERO System* rules reflect this by making it relatively difficult to kill player characters. They often get Stunned or Knocked Out, but they rarely die.

But since all characters, player and non, are built using the same rules and procedures, this "hard to kill" effect carries over to enemies and villains. It's usually not quite as stark, because the PCs are the heroes and therefore built on more Character and Experience Points than many of their adversaries, but it does exist.

The result is that, at the end of a Heroic combat, the PCs often face a battlefield littered with as many unconscious opponents as dead ones. This leads to a major dilemma: what to do with the surviving foes? In some cases the PCs can just walk away, but all too often that's not an option. Player characters who don't want to burden themselves with lots of prisoners (in other words, almost all PCs) are left with one unpleasant option — putting a bullet in the head of each unconscious enemy.

In the darkest campaigns, this is perfectly acceptable behavior: never leave a living enemy behind, as they say. But in others, particularly more lighthearted genres, having to slaughter a bunch of unconscious people simply for the sake of convenience destroys the mood of the setting and the game. After all, can you imagine Aragorn or James Bond walking around the field of combat after every battle and killing off all the survivors? Of course not, because it's completely contrary to the sense of drama and heroism inherent in such stories. The author either arranges things so the hero escapes from the fight somehow, or he has the enemies conveniently die of the wounds they suffered in honorable, dramatic combat. Killing an enemy in battle is highly appropriate; having to kill one in cold blood after the battle is not.

Of course, novels and movies aren't games, and games aren't novels and movies — although they have many similarities, they function differently and you have to approach them in slightly different ways. What works in a novel or movie doesn't necessarily work in a game. In a novel, the author can ensure that all the enemies die in battle, thus sparing the hero the need to kill them afterwards. A roleplaying game can't do that, because it's a mutually-crafted story told by the GM and players together, which means there must be rules to define what characters can do and how events unfold. And unfortunately, rules don't always quite portray dramatic reality the way you'd like it to — a poor die roll, or the like, cheats you of a dramatically appropriate moment or event.

However, it's possible for a GM and players to adapt the rules, or their approach to combat, to make a game a little more like novels and movies by using some or all of the following optional rules. They should only apply to minor or trivial NPCs; major enemies and villains should function in combat just like PCs do.

Ignore STUN Damage

The first, and perhaps most drastic, option is to ignore the STUN damage caused by Normal Damage and Killing Damage attacks altogether. STUN would still matter for Drain STUNs, knockout poisons, the *Club Weapon* Maneuver, and the like, but not for purposes of typical combat attacks. Once a minor enemy hits 0 BODY, he falls over dead.

In addition to eliminating the "coup de grace dilemma," this optional rule has a useful side Effect: it speeds up combat. It removes the need to count STUN damage or roll a STUN Multiplier. However, it may also make fists and Normal Damage weapons (such as clubs) less effective; if you find this to be the case, consider converting them to Killing Damage attacks with the same number of DCs of damage.

Stunned = Dead

With this option, any time a minor NPC becomes Stunned by a Normal Damage or Killing Damage attack, he's not Stunned — he's dead. This may make PCs *too* powerful, as they dispatch

minor NPCs like flies (though that would certainly make many combats go quicker). If you find that's the case, consider changing the rule so that only Knocked Out enemies automatically die.

One-Hit Wonders

Gamemasters using this option don't worry about the exact STUN and BODY a minor enemy has — they simply decide how many hits it takes to kill him. The weakest are one-hit wonders: a single successful Attack Roll against them kills them. Stronger foes require more, or better, hits. For example, a two-hit foe takes two successful Attack Rolls to kill, or only a single Attack Roll that's made by 2 or more; a three-hit foe needs three hits, or one hit made by 3 or more; and so on. To disguise what he's doing, the GM should still have the players roll damage dice; if a character gets an especially good roll, the GM may treat that as the equivalent of having made the Attack Roll by 1 or 2 points more.

Major Wounds

Sometimes it's not quantity that counts, but quality. With this optional rule, any time a character inflicts a single wound on a foe that does half or more of the foe's normal full positive BODY (after the foe applies defenses), that foe dies. For example, if Sarge fights a Mafia gunman (BODY 10) and inflicts a single wound that does 5 BODY or more (after the Mafiosi applies his defenses to reduce the damage), the Mafiosi dies. Note that it doesn't matter if the gunman had already taken 7 BODY damage so that he only had 3 BODY left; it's his regular BODY (10) that counts for this rule.

Altered Bleeding Rules

A character injured so that his BODY falls below 0 bleeds to death at the rate of 1 BODY at the end of each Turn. A foe with positive BODY never bleeds (unless you use the optional Bleeding rules). Altering the bleeding to death rules may eliminate the *coup de grace* problem in your game. Some possibilities include:

—Minor characters at 0 BODY or below bleed at the rate of 1 BODY per *Segment.*

—Minor characters at 0 BODY or below bleed at the rate of 1 BODY per Turn *per wound.*

—Minor characters who are Knocked Out bleed at a rapid rate (1 BODY per Phase or per Segment, for example), even if they still have positive BODY

—No bleeding to death — any minor character who reaches 0 BODY dies.

Increased BODY Damage

Lastly, you can solve this problem by increasing the BODY damage of weapons relative to the STUN damage. That improves the chances a minor NPC dies in battle. For example, maybe you could halve all STUN damage rolls without changing the BODY rolled. Or you could give all weapons another die or two of damage only for BODY, rolled after the character determines the STUN and BODY from his "main" damage dice.

STUN DAMAGE AND DEFENSES

One of the reasons the "Stunned, but not dead" problem arises in Heroic games is the comparative level of attacks versus defenses. Most Heroic characters have relatively low defenses — Normal Characteristic Maxima caps their natural PD and ED at 8 (assuming they buy that much), and the heaviest body armor (which characters often don't have access to) only adds about 13 DEF. Many Heroic characters also have fairly low STUN scores.

On the other hand, just about everyone *does* have access to fairly powerful weapons. Between weapons, STR, Combat Skill Levels, Martial Maneuvers, Haymakers, and other options, many characters can get up to the point where they dish out seven or more Damage Classes' worth of damage without too much trouble. The result is large STUN totals applied to comparatively paltry defenses — which leads to lots of characters getting Stunned and Knocked Out.

If this causes problems in your game, but you don't want to increase defenses overall (Heroic characters aren't supposed to be walking tanks, after all), consider applying a "reversed" form of Reduced Penetration to weapons damage (or at least to Normal Damage weapons, which do more STUN damage on the average). When a character is hit, roll the STUN and BODY damage of the attack normally. The character applies his defenses against the full BODY damage of the attack, but splits the STUN in half and applies his defenses separately to each portion. After he determines how much STUN he takes from each attack, he adds the taken damage together and compares it to his CON to determine if he's Stunned. This keeps BODY damage about the same, but reduces the frequency with which characters become Stunned or Knocked Out. (Naturally, you probably don't want to apply this rule to minor NPCs, though important NPCs should use it.)

HEALING AND RECOVERING DAMAGE

Combat inevitably leads to characters getting injured, or even killed. That raises the issue of what they can do to heal the wounds they sustain.

The Role And Place Of Healing

Before deciding what optional rules (if any) to adopt for healing (see below), GMs need to decide what role healing plays in the campaign.

In many Heroic campaigns, healing is rare. It's restricted to "realistic" methods such as drugs, surgery, and hospital care. There are no magic spells, wonder technology, or healing potions to patch a character up in just a few seconds or minutes. If a character suffers BODY damage, particularly in significant amounts, it's likely to be with him for quite a while.

The GM may need to compensate for the lack of quick-and-easy healing methods in the way he designs and runs scenarios. It's common, in many Heroic adventures, for the PCs to go through a series of encounters, each more difficult or deadly than the last, until they reach the climax of the story (which often features a major battle of some sort). If the PCs get "nicked" a little here and there along the way, by the time they reach the big finale they'll be so close to dead that they may have trouble triumphing. The situation gets worse if a few unlucky dice rolls leave the heroes badly injured before the climactic encounter. If the GM wants to avoid this (which he may not, in some highly "realistic" campaigns), he has several possible options.

First, he can arrange the scenario and its encounters to de-emphasize or eliminate most combats and other potentially injurious encounters in the early stages of a scenario. Instead of battles, he puts the PCs in situations where they have to conduct investigations, engage in diplomacy, foil or avoid security systems, and so on. However, this method may prove difficult to use frequently, or make things seem "too easy" for the adventurers.

Second, he can interpret his dice rolls "creatively." As long as he keeps them secret (as most GMs do), he can convert hits into misses, high damage rolls into low damage rolls, and so forth — all in the interest of making the story flow in a more appropriately dramatic fashion. If handled properly, this method works very well, though some GMs find it a little distasteful.

Third, he can find substitutes for injuring the PCs. For example, if the dice indicate a character's about to suffer a bad wound, the GM might choose to damage one of the character's weapons or some of his equipment instead. He might even give the player the choice: "OK, you can either take a 5 BODY hit, or your assault rifle can be so badly damaged it won't work until repaired — your decision."

Fourth, he can use some of the optional rules described below to let mundane healing methods have more effect than they "realistically" ought to. In many adventure stories and movies, often all a character needs to get back into fighting trim is a little "patching up," so it's perfectly appropriate to use the *Paramedics* Skill and other rules to keep the heroes in relatively good repair. (Alternately, the characters can buy abilities like the *Rapid Healing* Talent found in several Hero Games genre books.)

Optional Healing Rules

Here are some optional rules to help GMs deal with healing issues in their Heroic games. To make use of these methods, players should keep track of their characters' individual wounds. Rather than simply knowing his character's lost 6 BODY, a player needs to know his character has suffered three wounds of 1 BODY, 3 BODY, and 2 BODY.

These rules tend to make body armor even more valuable to characters, since it increases the likelihood a wound only does low BODY damage. The GM should consider them carefully before deciding to implement them, and be prepared to withdraw them from the campaign if they prove too effective.

ENHANCED HEALING

At the GM's option, the *Paramedics* Skill can fix minor wounds completely and make major wounds a little less painful. For each wound a character takes, another character with Paramedics can make a roll to restore 1 BODY of damage. To do this, the character must make a roll at a penalty of -1 per 2 BODY of the wound; this takes at least 1 Minute per BODY of the wound (and of course requires appropriate doctoring supplies, such as bandages, painkillers, and surgical needle and thread). If he succeeds, he heals 1 BODY of the damage. If he fails, he restores no BODY; if he fails by 4 or more, he inflicts another 1 BODY of damage.

A character may only have one character apply Paramedics to each wound in this fashion. Once a wound is treated, further treatment (even by another character with Paramedics) cannot benefit it any. However, if a character fails his Paramedics roll for a particular wound; another character can try his own Paramedics roll. Generally, a character cannot perform this type of Paramedics on himself, but the GM may allow it for some types of wounds. If so, the character takes double the penalty described above for his roll.

MINOR WOUNDS

If the GM chooses to use this optional rule, characters automatically "heal" minor wounds after they finish a battle. This represents the fact that the wounds weren't as bad as they first seemed — even a little bandaging repairs them just fine, the character has the willpower to ignore the pain and keep functioning, and so forth. The rule doesn't help a character at all during combat, but it helps keep him going through a series of encounters.

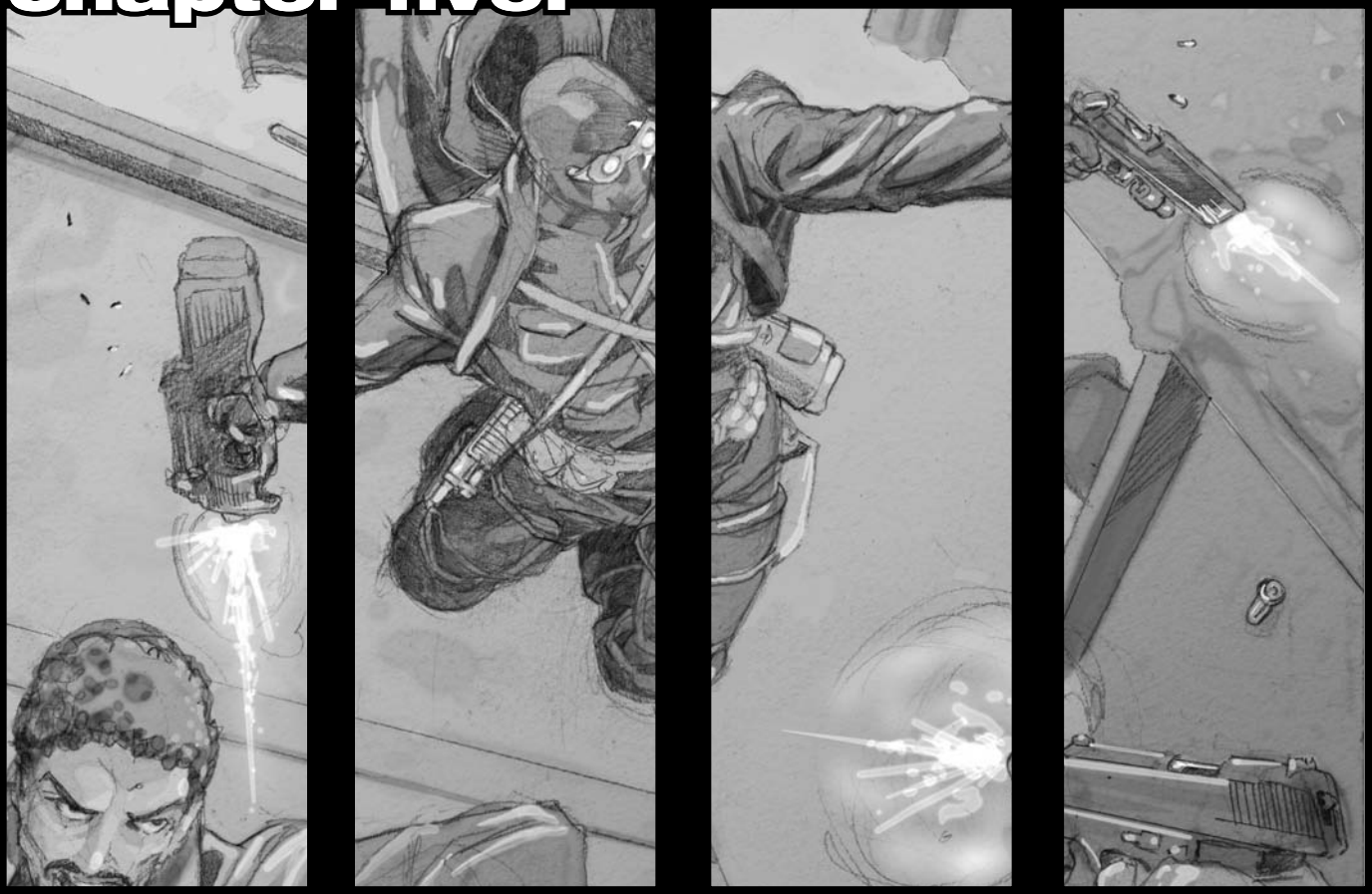
A "minor wound" is any wound of 1 BODY. If the injured character, or any other character, makes a Paramedics roll to treat the wound (no penalty to the roll, no significant supplies required, and takes 1 Turn), then the lost point of BODY is restored to the character in just a few minutes (the GM decides exactly when). Even if the character has no way to use Paramedics on his minor wounds, he automatically heals up to his REC worth of minor wounds per day. The GM may apportion the healing over the course of the day if desired, restore all the lost BODY to the character when he rests for the night, or the like.

If combined with the enhanced Paramedics rule, the minor wounds rule means any wound of 2 BODY can be treated down to 1 BODY, then healed as a minor wound. (This requires a second Paramedics roll, of course.) Thus, only wounds of 3 BODY or greater have any long-term effect on characters.

Recovery

Closely related to healing in general is REC and the character's ability to Recover lost STUN, END, and BODY. Gamemasters who want to run more "realistic" games may find that REC allows characters to keep functioning a little too long — particularly when it comes to Recovering END. To shorten battles a little, GMs may want to restrict characters' ability to Recover. Some possibilities include eliminating the Post-Segment 12 Recovery, and forbidding characters to take Recoveries in the middle of combat.

chapter five:



OTHER COMBAT RULES AND EFFECTS

OTHER COMBAT EFFECTS

Here are a few more situations that sometimes arise in combat.

Breaking Out Of Entangles And Grabs

If a character who's trying to break out of an Entangle (which doesn't require an Attack Roll) does twice the remaining BODY of the Entangle or more, he's free and has a Full Phase in which to act (*i.e.,* it takes no time at all to break out of the Entangle). If an attack against an Entangle does the remaining BODY of the Entangle or more (but less than twice the remaining BODY), the character is free and may perform a Half Phase Action. If an attack against an Entangle does less than the remaining BODY of the Entangle, the character is still Entangled and may take no more Actions that Phase. (The same applies if a character uses an innate ability, such as an Energy Blast, to try to destroy the Entangle.)

If a Grabbed character's attempt to break out of a Grab does twice as much BODY on his STR Roll as the BODY rolled for the Grabber's STR Roll, the Grabbed character frees himself and has a Full Phase in which to act. If the Grabbed character's attempt to break free does enough BODY to break free (*i.e.,* more BODY than rolled by the character Grabbing him), but less than twice the BODY on the Grabber's STR Roll, the Grabbed character is free, but may take no more Actions that Phase.

At the GM's option, a character does not have to make a complete escape from a Grab or Entangle. Instead, he can try to free only one limb, which he can then use as he sees fit. This allows +5 STR on the attempt to escape or break free, since he can concentrate his efforts on freeing just one limb.

Casual Strength

A character's Casual STR equals half of his normal STR. He may use Casual STR as a Zero Phase Action to push past or smash through obstacles while moving, break free from Entangles and Grabs, and the like. However, Casual STR may never be used to attack another character or cause damage to him.

Casual STR costs END to use, but a character only has to pay END for his STR once per Phase, no matter how many different things he does with it in that Phase. For example, a character could use Casual STR to break free from an Entangle, use it again to smash through an obstacle, and then punch someone with his full STR, and he only pays END for his STR once.

Since using Casual Strength is a Zero Phase Action, a character could use it and fail to achieve his objective (such as breaking free from a Grab), then choose to use his full STR for the rest of his Phase to accomplish the same goal.

Characters As Weapons

Characters often like to pick up an opponent and use him as an impromptu club or missile with which to attack another foe. This has the benefit of hurting both enemies.

Before a character can use another character as a club/missile, he must Grab the club/missile. If the club/missile is conscious (even Stunned), this requires the normal Attack Roll and imposes the normal penalties to the character's OCV and DCV. If he's unconscious, the character still has to make a Grab, but suffers only the standard -1 OCV and -2 DCV penalties (he doesn't have the usual halved DCV in general, and halved OCV against other targets, if his Grab succeeds).

Once the character has successfully Grabbed the club/missile, he may use the victim as a club against any target in HTH Combat range, or as a missile against any target within range of his throw (see the Throwing Table on page 35 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook). To do this, he must make a separate Attack Roll against that target. Unless the GM rules otherwise, this is a separate Attack Action, so it cannot be performed in the same Phase when the character performs his Grab. The standard CV modifiers for Grab apply, and the GM may impose other modifiers to reflect the circumstances. If the attack succeeds, both the club/missile and the target take the character's STR damage. (See pages 63, 90 for rules regarding missed Throws.)

Using another character as a club entails a Weapon Size/Shape penalty of -2 OCV (if the "club" is unconscious) or -4 OCV (if he's awake). A character used as a missile is neither balanced nor aerodynamic (-4 OCV). These penalties are in addition to any the character suffers for performing a Grab.

Crushing Damage

Sometimes characters get crushed under heavy objects (or enemies using Density Increase). To calculate the effects of crushing, determine the STR required to lift the heavy object. Then use that STR to apply damage to whatever it's crushing (to save time, you may want to apply the Standard Effect Rule and have the STR do 1 BODY and 3 STUN damage per d6). As always, the GM may modify this rule to prevent abuse, or in the interest of game balance, common sense, and/or dramatic sense.

Frequency Of Crushing Damage

If a character does crushing damage (typically because he has Density Increase and stands on top of another character), the crushing damage applies on each of his Phases. The character has to take an Attack Action and succeed with an Attack Roll to maintain the crushing each Phase after the Phase in which he first crushes the character. If the Attack Roll fails, the victim has somehow resisted being crushed that Segment, but hasn't gotten out from underneath the character crushing him (the GM may rule that a badly failed Attack Roll *does* mean the victim wins free).

Since applying crushing damage this way is an Attack Action, doing it ends the character's Phase, and if the character decides to attack someone else he cannot make an Attack Roll to crush the victim. If a character wants to be able to crush people and still do other things, he should buy a Damage Shield that does damage equivalent to his crushing damage, with appropriate Limitations.

If it's an object or phenomena doing the crushing (for example, if a landslide covers up a character, or a safe falls on him and pins him), the character takes the crushing damage in the Segment when he's first crushed, and then every Turn thereafter. For ease of bookkeeping, the GM can just apply the damage every Segment 12; for greater complication, apply it every Turn in the same Phase when the character was first crushed. (Alternately, the GM could impose crushing damage per Segment, like damage from chemicals, if that seems more appropriate given the circumstances.)

Dragging

Characters may sometimes find themselves dragged along the ground behind galloping horses, fast-moving chariots or stagecoaches, motorized vehicles, or the like. In that situation, the dragged character typically takes velocity/3 in d6 of Normal Damage. The GM can change some or all of this to Killing Damage if the surface is particularly sharp, abrasive, or the like; he can reduce the damage if the surface is soft. A dragged character can make a Breakfall roll at -1 per 2d6 of damage he'd otherwise take to reduce the damage by half.

Disguising Damage

Sometimes a character wants to "disguise" the sort of damage he's doing — usually to keep Killing Damage from looking like Killing Damage, so onlookers won't suspect the level of force he's using on his opponent. Another possible use is to make a Nerve Strike look like a Normal Damage attack, so observers don't know the pacifistic attacker is reluctant to use more damaging maneuvers.

To do this, the attacker must make his Attack Roll at -1 OCV for every 2 Damage Classes in the attack — thus, an HKA 2d6 would impose a -3 penalty. If the Attack Roll succeeds, the target takes the damage in the usual method for that type of damage, but to anyone else observing the attack, it looks like a Normal Damage attack.

If the GM allows characters to buy Power Advantages for Martial Maneuvers (see page 105 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist*), you can also achieve this effect without the OCV penalty by buying a +¼ *Invisible Power Effects* Advantage for the maneuver you want to disguise. The character could take a *Requires A DEX Roll* (-½) Limitation on the Advantage if the GM desires.

The Fastball Special

A "fastball special" is a special form of Grab By, Move By, or Move Through in which a character without significant movement abilities of his own is thrown by a high-STR character (a character, in other words!) at a designated target. It works like a normal Grab By, Move By, or Move Through, except that the "fastball's" velocity depends on the high-STR character's ability to throw him. Use the Throwing Table on page 35 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* to determine how fast and far a character can be thrown. For example, if a character has an extra 25 STR with which to make a Throw, and he makes a Standing Throw as part of a fastball special, the "fastball" has a velocity of 10".

To perform a fastball special, have the thrower make a normal Attack Roll against the target; the CV modifiers for the maneuver the fastball plans to use do not apply to the throw, but the normal -4 OCV for throwing an unbalanced, non-aerodynamic missile do. (Picking up and throwing the fastball counts as an Attack Action that in and of itself doesn't alter the CVs of the people involved; the thrower doesn't have to use a Grab and Throw, thereby reducing both his and the fastball's CVs.) If the throw succeeds (*i.e.,* the thrower put the "fastball" in a position to make a HTH Combat attack against the target), the "fastball" then makes his own Attack Roll; CV modifiers for the maneuver he uses do apply to his roll, but he doesn't suffer a penalty just for being a fastball.

Example: *Ironclad (STR 60, OCV 7) is going to throw Nighthawk (STR 20, OCV 8) in a "fastball special" so he can perform a Grab By to snatch a magic amulet out of a villain's hands. Nighthawk weighs 100 kilograms, so Ironclad has 50 STR more than he needs to lift his*

friend. Ironclad's running throw allows him to toss Nighthawk 40". The villain is DCV 7. Ironclad makes an Attack Roll and rolls an 7, which allows him to hit the villain — the -3 OCV for a Grab By doesn't apply to his roll, but Nighthawk is unbalanced and non-aerodynamic (-4 OCV). That means Nighthawk is in position to perform his maneuver. Nighthawk has an OCV of 8, +1 Overall Level, for 9, but suffers the -3 OCV, -4 DCV penalty for the maneuver. He rolls an 8 and hits! He gets +8 STR for the maneuver, giving him 5½d6 for his attempt to wrest the amulet from the villain.

The "fastball" character gets a Full Phase in which to act, since another character supplies his movement. Typically he devotes the whole Phase to making the attack. However, before being thrown, or after traveling halfway to his target (*i.e.,* making a "Half Move"), he could use a Zero-Phase Action to activate a power. That could be something simple (making his claws grow so he can use them with the attack), or something complicated like activating a Movement Power or Body-Affecting Power (see below).

At the GM's option, the "fastball" can use another Combat Maneuver or Martial Maneuver, such as a Grab, Martial Disarm, Martial Strike, or Passing Strike, as part of the attack, but still get the typical velocity bonus to damage (or STR) as if performing a Move By. This can cause game balance problems, but may be appropriate for some situations.

THE FASTBALL SPECIAL AND MOVEMENT

The basic fastball special rules assume the "fastball" doesn't have Movement Powers that would allow him to reach the target, or that his Movement Powers aren't powerful enough to let him get that far and still attack. But that may not always be the case, and a proper combination of throwing velocity and Movement Powers can yield some interesting results.

A "fastball" with any amount of Flight can use 1" of Flight as a Half-Phase Action to change the direction he's traveling as a fastball by up to sixty degrees (one hex side) without losing any of his fastball velocity (or adding to it). At the GM's option, if the character applies one Movement Skill Level, or makes a DEX Roll at -4, he can turn up to 120 degrees (two hex sides) without losing any fastball velocity. This is a good way to make a Surprise Move or hurl the fastball around a corner.

At the GM's option, if the "fastball" has more inches of Flight than the number of inches he's been thrown, he can add the excess to the throwing inches, thus increasing both his distance traveled and velocity-based damage. For example, if Ironclad throws Sapphire 10", and Sapphire has Flight 15", she can add (15-10) 5" to her distance traveled and velocity for damage purposes. This counts as a Half Phase Action, regardless of how many inches of movement the fastball adds.

Alternately, but also at the GM's option, if the "fastball" has any number of inches of Flight, he can add those directly to his fastball velocity, "stacking" both of them to achieve a much higher velocity (and thus greater distance traveled and damage done). Using the example above, that would allow Sapphire to travel 25" and do a total of +8d6 damage with a Move Through. This option can be extremely unbalancing for the game, though, so GMs should consider carefully before allowing characters to use it in the game.

If for some reason a "fastball" with Flight wants to slow down, he can apply half his inches of Flight to counteract his thrown velocity as a Half Phase Action.

If the "fastball" has Teleportation, he can make a Half Move with his Teleportation during the throw to either increase the distance he's thrown (but not the damage from velocity), or to alter his direction of attack and thus possibly gain a Surprise Move bonus (this tactic works best if the fastball has the *Position Shift* Adder for his Teleportation).

THE FASTBALL SPECIAL AND CHANGING FORM

The fastball special rules assume the "fastball" keeps the same size, form, and mass he had when thrown. However, Body-Affecting Powers can interact with a fastball special maneuver in various ways. The easiest thing is for the GM to just ignore this entirely, except for purposes of determining the character's mass (and thus how far he can be thrown). But GMs desiring greater "realism" (and thus complexity) should consider using the following rules.

Density Increase: If a character has Density Increase active at the moment he's thrown, use it to determine his mass. If he activates the power in the middle of the maneuver, re-calculate how far the thrower could have thrown him. If he's already traveled that far or further, he immediately drops to the ground. If he still has some inches left to travel at his higher mass, he travels them, but no further. If a high-mass character falls on a target, use the rules for dropped objects on page 436 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* to determine how much damage he does (possibly adding a die or two to account for the velocity from the throw, if appropriate).

On the other hand, if the character is heavier than normal when thrown, but then deactivates his Density Increase and becomes lighter in mid-flight, re-calculate how far the thrower could have thrown him. Add *half* the extra inches to the character's inches traveled and velocity for damage purposes.

Desolidification: A character has to be solid to be thrown (unless the thrower has STR that can affect Desolidified objects, in which case consider the Desolidified character to have his normal mass for purposes of calculating the throw distance). However, the character could activate Desolidification after making a Half Move, and thus move through solid objects in his path. The problem with doing so is that the rules would not normally allow him to turn his Desolidification off in time to hit the target and injure him. In this case, the GM can either grant an exception to that rule, or allow an exception if the character successfully makes a roll with an appropriate *Power* Skill or other Skill.

Duplication: If a character Duplicates while in mid-throw, the Duplicates have his same velocity and trajectory, and hit the target if he would. The GM may impose restrictions, based on common sense and dramatic sense, regarding how many "fastball Duplicates" can hit a single target (two or three is usually a good maximum).

Growth: Growth functions just like Density Increase regarding the way it increases (or decreases) mass. At the GM's option, a Growing character can use growth momentum against the target (since the target is sort of "above" him as he travels); this may require the character to succeed with a roll with an appropriate *Power* Skill or other Skill.

Multiform and Shape Shift: If a character uses one of these powers to alter his form in a way that increases his mass, apply the rules for Density Increase to determine what happens. If his change of shape alters his balance and/or aerodynamic qualities, apply the *worse* of the two modifiers from the *Range Modifiers For Thrown Objects* table (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 35) to the thrower's Attack Roll. For example, if the character starts out neither balanced nor aerodynamic (-4 to thrower's OCV), but changes shape to a balanced object (-2 OCV), the thrower still suffers the -4 OCV. Similarly, if the character starts out balanced and aerodynamic (-0 OCV), but changes form to be non-aerodynamic (-2 OCV), the thrower suffers a -2 OCV penalty.

Beyond that, the GM should use his common sense and dramatic sense to determine the effects of changing shape. For example, some shapes may be so broad or flat that they slow the character down, subtracting inches from his velocity.

Shrinking: Fastballs often start out Shrunk, since that allows the thrower to toss them a long way (and doesn't effect the STR with which they strike!). If they increase their size in mid-flight, apply the rules above for Density Increase to determine how much they slow down. As discussed under *Growth,* above, they may be able to use growth momentum damage when they hit their target.

Shrinking in mid-throw has an effect opposite that of Density Increase. When the character Shrinks, determine how far the initial throw would have thrown him at his new mass. Add *half* the extra inches to the character's inches traveled and velocity for damage purposes.

> **Example:** *Shrinker, at regular height and mass, is thrown by someone with 30 extra STR (so she's traveling 24"). After making a Half Move, she takes a Zero-Phase Action to Shrink down to the point where she weighs .2 kg. At that weight, the thrower has 75 extra STR for throwing purposes (for a distance of 60"). Half the difference is (60-24 = 36) 18", so Shrinker*

now travels (24+18) 42", using that velocity to calculate damage if she hits the target.

Stretching: If they succeed with a DEX Roll, characters with Stretching can time their use of the power just right so they can add Stretching velocity damage to the damage they do from being "fastballs." Stretching may also allow a character who won't travel quite far enough because of the throw to "add" a few inches onto the end of the maneuver and manage to strike his target. Unusual alterations of form via Stretching should be dealt with as discussed under *Multiform And Shape Shift,* above.

Inability To Sense An Opponent

A character who cannot perceive his opponent(s) or target(s) with a Targeting Sense (because he's been attacked with a Flash, is in a Darkness field, is otherwise "blinded," or his opponent is Invisible) suffers the following penalties:

—In *HTH Combat,* the character is at ½ OCV and ½ DCV. This applies both to when he makes attacks in HTH Combat, and is attacked in HTH Combat.

—In *Ranged Combat,* the character is at 0 OCV and ½ DCV. This applies both to when he makes attacks in Ranged Combat, and is attacked in Ranged Combat.

If a character can make a PER Roll with a Nontargeting Sense (a Half Phase Action) to perceive a particular target, then against that target only he is at -1 DCV, ½ OCV when attacked or attacking in HTH Combat, and full DCV, ½ OCV when attacked from or attacking at Range. Against all other targets he is affected by the standard "lack of Targeting Sense" modifiers described above. The benefits of making this roll last until the beginning of the character's next Phase; if he wants them to continue, he has to use another Half Phase Action and succeed with another PER Roll.

INVISIBILITY IN COMBAT

At the GM's option, Invisible characters may get Surprise bonuses when they attack — even if another character knows there's an invisible enemy skulking about, he's still going to have a hard time figuring out exactly where the Invisible character's attack is coming from or getting out of its way. Since being Invisible already confers certain combat benefits (see above), the Surprise bonus should be limited to +1 OCV at most.

When facing an Invisible opponent in combat, a character can try to make a new PER Roll once per Phase to find the Invisible target until he succeeds. This is a Half Phase Action. Once a PER Roll succeeds, usually no further rolls are needed — after that he knows generally where the Invisible character is. However, if he turns his attention somewhere else or becomes Stunned, he must make a new PER Roll to reacquire the Invisible target when he can next act.

If an Invisible character makes a visible attack, the target of that attack (and anyone else who succeeds with a PER Roll to spot the attack) only suffers a -1 to his OCV to attack back, even at Range, until the Invisible character moves. Once the Invisible character moves out of the hex where he was standing when he made the visible attack, his Invisibility affects OCVs as normal.

As discussed on *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 192, a character's weapons are covered by his Invisibility except in the Phases he uses them to make attacks, and there are many ways to negate the benefits of Invisibility in combat.

GRABBING A TARGET

At the GM's option, if a character Grabs his opponent, he gets a bonus in HTH Combat to overcome the restrictions of being unable to perceive that opponent with a Targeting Sense. Grabbing the foe automatically gives the attacker a successful PER Roll with a Nontargeting Sense (Touch) against that foe. However, he's still at ½ DCV against the person he has Grabbed, and other Grab rules apply. In other words, if a blinded character can Grab his foe, he'll be only at -1 OCV and ½ DCV when fighting his opponent. He's at 0 OCV against anyone he's not Grabbing, and is at 0 DCV at range.

Large Targets

Normal-sized characters sometimes find themselves fighting much larger opponents — giants, enormous dragons, building-sized killer robots, necromantic colossi, and so forth. The default rules for the *HERO System* don't make any allowance for this in the interest of speedy and simple game play. Thus, even though a swordsman may only be able to reach a giant's feet and ankles, he can still hack him to death with enough blows. Of course, larger creatures have more BODY than human-sized ones, but in the end enough damage gets the job done. That's certainly fitting for the "dramatic heroism" the rules favor.

Gamemasters who find this "unrealistic" should consider implementing an optional rule to fix the problem. Some possibilities include:

—Use the Hit Location rules, if you're not doing so already. If a human-sized character can only attack a larger foe's feet and lower legs, the Hit Location penalty reduces the damage considerably. Roll all HTH attacks as Low Shots.

—Reduce the damage that a smaller creature's attacks do to a larger creature. To some extent, the rules for different weapon sizes take care of this; a sprite's tiny sword does very little damage to begin with. But for human-sized and larger creatures, you could reduce the damage an attack does by -1 point of BODY per Size/Weight category the target is above the character. (Thus, a human's attacks would do -3 BODY to Huge creatures.) Alternately, you could rule that for any target creature more than one Size/Weight category larger than the attacker, the *Reduced Penetration* Limitation automatically applies to the attack.

—Give large creatures extra defenses that only apply to attacks made by smaller creatures. One to three points of Resistant Defense per Size/Weight category above "Human-sized" should suffice.

Missed And Random Shots

If a character misses with a Ranged attack, generally that's all that happens — the missed attack doesn't hit another character. If an attack would ricochet off some surface or is Missile Deflected, it's assumed not to hit any other target.

At the GM's option, if a character misses his target with a Ranged attack, and there's another potential target it could hit (for example, another goblin standing just a few feet behind the goblin he shot an arrow at), there's a possibility the second, unintended, target gets hit instead. The character should make another Attack Roll, using his base OCV at -3 (*i.e.,* no Combat Skill Levels or weapons modifiers apply). If he succeeds, he hits the unintended target — not necessarily a good thing, since the unintended target might be a friend.

The GM may, if he chooses, decide that a missed attack ricochets and hits something significant. Generally this should not be another character or target, but instead some feature of the environment that makes the situation more dramatic — a barrel that begins leaking a flammable liquid, the safety switch on the nuclear reactor, a fire alarm, a rope holding up a chandelier, and so forth. Characters cannot Missile Deflect an attack into a potentially useful "target" this way; that requires Missile Reflection.

If a character chooses to fire randomly into a crowd hoping to hit someone (not any target in particular, just anyone who happens to be in the way), roll his base OCV (no modifiers) against an appropriate DCV to determine if he succeeds. The DCV should normally be 3 for a relatively tightly-packed crowd; thinner or more spread out crowds should have a higher DCV.

In some cases NPCs will try to use a crowd as "cover" from a character's attacks. If a character insists on trying to hit the NPC anyway, use the normal Concealment rules (page 43); a missed shot generally means the person being used as cover, or a random person in the crowd, gets hit instead.

Shoving

At the GM's option, any character can shove another character the same distance he could throw him with a Prone Throw; this is a standard combat action involving STR and doesn't require the character to purchase any maneuver. The GM may, if he wishes, allow a character with only 0 Extra STR to still shove someone ½". The general rules for Shove (see page 95) apply to this type of shoving.

OPTIONAL COMBAT RULES

This section includes some optional rules for combat in unusual situations. The GM decides whether they apply in his campaign.

Groundfighting

Sometimes fights end up with two characters struggling on the ground, rather than standing up trading blows. In other cases, a character gets knocked down and has to keep fighting from the ground because he doesn't have the time or opportunity to stand up safely. Unfortunately, "groundfighting" can be difficult.

First, characters on the ground (*i.e.,* who are "prone" in game terms, even if they're not lying flat on their backs) are at half DCV when attacked by non-prone characters. They have their full DCV against attacks from other prone characters.

Second, attacking from the ground imposes a -2 OCV penalty on both HTH and Ranged attacks,

INTERPOSING EXAMPLE

Sir Gareth tries to defend his injured squire, Roderick, from the attacks of an assassin. He moves between Roderick and the assassin, Interposing himself. He puts his Skill Levels into DCV and has a base DCV of 8; he opts to reduce it by 5, to 3. This tells the assassin he's going to have to expose himself to Sir Gareth's attack if he attacks Roderick — Sir Gareth gets a +5 OCV on attacks against the assassin (which he could use for a Block or an offensive attack). His base OCV is 6; it's 11 versus the assassin only, and only if the assassin attacks Roderick instead of him.

regardless of whether the target is prone or standing. The GM may decide not to impose this penalty on Ranged attacks, if appropriate.

Third, groundfighting affects the weapons a character can use easily. No weapon suffers a penalty against a standing target. Against other prone targets, Small weapons suffer no penalty, Medium weapons suffer a -1 OCV, and Long weapons suffer a -2 OCV (and may not be usable at all if the target is too close; see page 52).

Fourth, groundfighting has several effects on the use of Martial Maneuvers. First, it restricts the Maneuvers a character can use. Obviously he cannot use many kicks, and all maneuvers which damage a character by causing him to fall are useless; characters are often limited to punches, grappling, and similar maneuvers. Second, a character not trained in groundfighting suffers a -2 OCV and ½ DCV penalty.

At the GM's option, a character can eliminate groundfighting penalties as to his groundfighting opponent if he makes a PS: Groundfighting roll (or, for Martial Arts, has a special Element, *Use Art while Prone*). The ½ DCV penalty normally applied to prone characters targeted by non-prone characters still applies even if the character makes his roll (or has that Element).

Ignoring Opponents

In the *HERO System,* a character can run right past and ignore an opponent standing in his way, even if that opponent has Held an Action — the character suffers no penalty at all. But that's inappropriate for many Fantasy campaigns, where you should use the following optional rule instead:

If one character moves right past (*i.e.,* through the same or an adjacent hex) a foe using a Held Action to strike at him, the moving character has only ½ his DCV against the attack. If the character moves right up to a person waiting to attack him and stops there, or moves past in a Move Through and attacks him, he has his normal DCV. After moving up to that hex and performing a maneuver (Strike, Block, Dodge, anything) the character can continue on during his next Phase and suffers no DCV penalty... but he must spend at least one Phase in conflict with his enemy or he suffers the penalty.

Interposing

In the *HERO System,* it's difficult for one character to defend another. He can attack his friend's attacker, or use a Block to parry the attacker's blows. He could even Dive For Cover in front of the attacker's blow, automatically taking the damage his friend would have suffered. Players and GMs who want another way to defend other characters can use this optional rule, which only applies to HTH Combat.

To *Interpose* himself into a fight, a character moves in between the attacker and the person he wants to defend. Then he tells the GM what sort of a DCV penalty he wants to take. Every -1 he takes to his DCV is a +1 to his OCV if the attacker again attacks the person he's defending. (He can apply the OCV bonus to Block, if desired.) The attacker knows this; he can tell what the character's doing and the potential consequences. The DCV penalty and OCV bonus apply only against that one attacker; against all others, the character has his usual OCV and DCV.

A character who doesn't want to be defended can cancel the Interpose attempt by moving 1" in the direction of his attacker or otherwise declaring that he chooses not to be defended. If the Interposing character is aware of the decision, the Interposing effects go away; he gets his full DCV back. If the Interposing character is not aware of the decision, his DCV stays reduced... but he does not get an OCV bonus if the other person attacks the person the character thinks he's defending.

A character can Interpose to protect a doorway or window, to keep someone from getting through it. If the attacking character tries to get past him, the interposing character gets his OCV bonus.

Sucker Attacks

Sometimes characters want to trick an enemy into attacking them in such a way that the attack misses and accidentally hits one of the attacker's comrades. Usually this involves tricking one foe into shooting another foe with a gun or blaster, but it may mean sidestepping so that two characters trying to perform a Move Through on the same target run into each other instead.

To make a sucker attack, the character has to have a Held Action available. He waits until the first attacker is just about to attack, then Dodges so the second attacker takes the hit instead. First, he must make a DEX Roll against the first attacker's DEX Roll to time his Dodge just right — if he fails, the first attacker's attack goes off before he Dodges. Second, the first and second attackers must be properly "lined up" for one to have a chance to hit the other. If so, the first attacker must make an Attack Roll using only his base OCV (as calculated from DEX, without Combat Skill Levels, maneuver bonuses, or the like) against the second attacker's DCV. If that roll succeeds, the second attacker takes the damage intended for the character.

Targeting Injured Areas

Sometimes a character wants to target an opponent's existing injuries or infirmities as a way of weakening, disabling, or torturing him. This isn't always very heroic, of course — but then again, not all characters are heroes.

For purposes of these rules, an injury or wound is defined as any point on the body where a character has taken BODY damage, regardless of the type of attack used to inflict that damage or whether the area is visibly injured. Cuts and stab wounds from swords and knives, claw wounds from animals, bullet wounds, and the like are all "injuries."

Targeting an existing injury can be easy or difficult, depending on the size of the wound. A large wound (for example, a long cut from a sword) imposes a -4 to -5 OCV modifier. A medium-sized wound (for example, claw wounds from a tiger) imposes a -5 to -7 OCV modifier. A small wound (for example, a stab wound or a bullet wound) imposes a -7 to -12 OCV modifier. These modifiers take the place of the Hit Location modifiers normally used for Placed Shots (in effect the wound becomes a separate target).

Hitting a wound or injured area has several painful effects. The first hit to an existing wound is so painful that negative damage modifiers (such as x½) for STUN and BODY for the location of the wound are ignored. The victim takes full damage, calculated with any positive modifiers (such as x1½ or x2).

The second hit to an existing injury has the same effect as the first hit, plus it Impairs the area (the GM should roll the Impairment Time normally). The third and any subsequent hits to an existing injury have the same effect as the second hit, plus the BODY damage done by the attack is Penetrating. (At the GM's option, the attack may instead automatically be Disabling.)

Twisting The Blade

A favorite trick of many villains (and a few vengeful heroes) is to stick a weapon into an enemy and then twist the blade, causing intense pain and a worse wound. To do this in *HERO System* combat, the attacking character must declare his intention to twist the blade before he makes the initial attack; furthermore, characters can only perform this maneuver with Short or Medium weapons. The attack is at -3 OCV (to reflect both the difficulty of impaling someone this way and certain game balance considerations), and must do BODY damage to the target. If the target takes Knockback (assuming the campaign uses the Knockback rules) or Knockdown, the attempt automatically fails. If the attack succeeds, does BODY, and does no Knockback/Knockdown, and the target cannot escape (see below), then in his next Phase the attacker may twist the blade in the wound, doing half of the weapon's base damage (*i.e.,* damage without STR or Damage Classes added to it), against which the target gets no defenses at all. Twisting the blade is a Half Phase Action (but may only be performed once per Phase), so the character can make another attack, if possible.

The victim of this sort of attack can escape having the blade twisted in several ways. First, he can Knock Out, Stun, or kill his attacker with an attack of his own. Because the attacker has to get extremely close to the target to try an attack of this sort, he is at -2 DCV against attacks the target makes against him. Second, he can use a Full Phase Action to try to move off of the weapon without injuring himself. The target must step away from his attacker and make a DEX Roll at -1 per BODY taken from the initial attack. If the DEX Roll succeeds, the target extracts the blade without sustaining further injury. If the roll fails, the target takes damage just as if the attacker had twisted the blade. If the target cannot move away from his attacker (for example, if he's been backed against a wall), then he cannot remove the blade in this fashion.

TWISTING THE BLADE EXAMPLE

Isamu (CV 7) and Takeshi (CV 6), two kenjutsuka, hate each other bitterly. They begin to duel with katanas. Isamu decides he will try to hit Takeshi and then twist the blade, to make Takeshi suffer. Isamu uses a Lightning Stroke; his OCV is 7 (base of 7, +2 for the maneuver, +1 for the weapon, -3 for the attempt to impale). He rolls a 9 and hits. The weapon does a base 1½d6 HKA, and Isamu is STR 10, so the attack does 2d6+1 HKA total. He rolls 8 for damage, penetrating Takeshi's 4 PD Armor and doing 4 BODY. The Hit Location Roll says Takeshi was struck in the stomach, so he takes 32 STUN against his defenses. Isamu's katana is now stuck in Takeshi's body.

Takeshi decides he'd better get off of Isamu's katana before he's hurt worse. He decides to try a DEX Roll at -4 (-1 per BODY taken), and fails miserably. Because of his failure, he takes half of the weapon's base damage, with no defense. Isamu rolls ½d6+1 for damage, for a total of 3 BODY and 12 STUN, which Takeshi takes all of (he gets no defense). In Isamu's next Phase, he twists the blade, doing 3 more BODY and 12 STUN. Takeshi is unconscious and bleeding to death.

TARGETING WOUNDS EXAMPLE

The tongs hire Xiu Kwan, the lin kuei assassin, to kill a prominent shopkeeper who refused to pay them protection money. The killing is supposed to be painful to set an example. Xiu ambushes his target during the working day where several customers and other merchants can see him. First he throws a volley of shuriken, doing 2 BODY to the victim's Right Leg, 1 BODY to his Chest, and 1 BODY to his Left Arm. Then he moves in to make his victim suffer. The GM rules the leg wound is small and imposes a -8 OCV modifier on Xiu. With all of his levels in OCV, Xiu targets the leg wound and hits it, causing full STUN (no x½ modifier is applied). Then, to make sure the shopkeeper won't run away, Xiu hits the leg wound again, causing full STUN and Impairing the leg for 1 hour (GM rolls 4 on the Impairment Time Table). If he hits it a third time, the BODY damage done is Penetrating.

RECOVERY

POST-SEGMENT 12 RECOVERY EXAMPLE

At the end of Segment 12, Chiron has only 4 END and 13 STUN left. Fortunately, the Turn is over and he gets a Post-Segment 12 Recovery. He has a REC of 5, so he regains 5 STUN and 5 END, for a total of 13 + 5 = 18 STUN and 4 + 5 = 9 END. As the next Turn begins, Chiron has 18 STUN and 9 END.

During combat, a character may temporarily lose both STUN and END. To reflect the body's recuperative capacity, each character has a Recovery (REC) Characteristic.

Characters use REC to regain STUN and END. This is known as "Recovering" or "taking a Recovery." When a character Recovers, add his REC to his current STUN and END totals. Characters may Recover STUN and END lost due to injuries, using one's Powers, being attacked with an Ego Attack, or any other cause (unless the rules indicate otherwise — for example, STUN lost to a Drain STUN returns to the character according to the rules for Drain, it's not Recovered).

Characters get to Recover in two situations: Post-Segment 12; and when they choose to do so as a Full Phase Action.

POST-SEGMENT 12 RECOVERY

After Segment 12 each Turn, all characters (even Stunned ones) get a free Post-Segment 12 Recovery. This Recovery occurs automatically (unless the character is holding his breath [see below] or is deeply unconscious). Characters get a Post-Segment 12 Recovery even if they're taking damage from a Constant attack.

Other game events that occur in Post-Segment 12, such as the fading of an Adjustment Power or the gaining of BODY from Regeneration, take place before the Post-Segment 12 Recovery.

TAKING A RECOVERY AS AN ACTION

Second, a character may choose to take a Recovery as his Action in any of his Phases. Taking a Recovery is a Full Phase Action and occurs at the end of the Segment (after all other characters who have a Phase that Segment have acted). A character who Recovers during a Phase may do nothing else — not even maintaining a Constant Power, or Actions that cost no END or take no time (however, a character may take a Zero Phase Action at the beginning of his Phase to turn off a power). While Recovering, a character is at ½ DCV, and all modifiers for Placed Shots made to hit him are halved as well. A character who Recovers during Segment 12 also gets the Post-Segment 12 Recovery.

A character cannot Hold his Action (or voluntarily lower his DEX) and then Recover. A character cannot Abort to a Recovery, nor can he "abandon" a declared Recovery to perform any action unless the GM permits him to.

Being Attacked While Taking A Recovery

A character may be hit by an attack while taking a Recovery (either as an Action, or because he's unconscious and can do nothing else). If he takes no damage from the attack after applying his defenses, he may take his Recovery as normal. However, if the character takes any STUN or BODY damage from the attack, his Recovery has been interrupted. He does not get back any END or STUN and may take no Actions — he has just wasted a Phase. (At the GM's option, this also occurs if a character suffers any similar effect, such as losing INT to a Drain INT or taking Knockback.)

If a character takes damage in a Segment in which he has a Phase, but prior to his DEX in the initiative order (in other words, before he has had a chance to act or declare an Action), he may declare a Recovery when he gets his Phase. The Recovery occurs at the end of the Segment, per the usual rules. If he takes damage *after* declaring his Recovery, the Recovery is spoiled, as described above.

HOLDING BREATH AND DROWNING

A character who holds his breath does not get to Recover, even on Post-Segment 12. He also expends a minimum of 1 END per Phase. He may lower his SPD to 2 (see page 16) to reduce the amount of END he uses.

A character who runs out of END while not breathing expends STUN as END (see page 143). A character who runs out of STUN then loses BODY, drowning at -1 BODY/Phase.

All characters drown at a minimum SPD of 2; so even a SPD 1 character must expend 2 END per Turn. (Low SPD individuals react more slowly, but they still have to breathe!)

RECOVERING BODY

Generally, a character Recovers a number of BODY in one month equal to his REC. The GM can apportion this BODY over the course of the month. For instance, Chiron of the preceding example could Recover 5 BODY in a month, or approximately 1 BODY every 6 days. This rate of healing assumes the character takes it easy.

If the character moves around, fights, travels, or engages in similar strenuous activity, the healing rate is halved. If the conditions are very poor, unsanitary, overly cold or hot (he's in jail, perhaps), or otherwise unfavorable for healing, the healing rate is also halved. If a character is suffering from any Impairing or Disabling wounds, that may also double the normal healing time, at the GM's discretion.

On the other hand, hospital care can halve the time needed to heal (thus doubling the amount of BODY a character can Recover in a month). Modern (or even more advanced) medicine may greatly speed up the character's healing rate. If the campaign is high-tech, then the GM may want to adjust the healing rate for characters receiving medical attention. Similarly, in some campaigns healing magic can speed a character's progression back to full health.

ENDURANCE

Actions require some energy. The *HERO System* reflects this by requiring characters to use Endurance (END) to perform physical feats. The general rule is that 10 Active Points' worth of a Power or STR cost 1 END each Phase to use. Thus, a character using an Energy Blast 2d6 would use 1 END. Characteristics other than STR do not cost END to use, unless noted otherwise.

Of course, a character does not have to use all of his STR, or use a Power at full power if he doesn't want to. Using STR and Powers at partial power is a good way to conserve END.

Some Maneuvers and other Actions don't have a listed STR value. In such cases, a character spends 1 END (unless the GM rules otherwise). This includes Combat Maneuvers such as Block, Dodge, or firing a weapon. Martial Maneuvers do not cost END (but see page 85).

Characters regain at least some of the END they've expended when they get a Recovery (see *Recovery*).

USING STUN FOR ENDURANCE

A character who runs out of END — *i.e.,* who reaches 0 END, or is reduced into negative END through a Drain or similar attack — and still wishes to perform Actions may use STUN as END. The character takes 1d6 STUN Only damage for every 2 "END" (or fraction thereof) used, and no defense is allowed against this damage. Yes, characters can Knock themselves Out using this rule. Isn't it wonderful to be heroic?

Characters cannot spend END below 0. Once they reach 0 END, they can only spend STUN in place of END, as described above. A Drain or similar Power can reduce END below 0, but characters can't spend END into the negatives.

SUPERHEROIC AND HEROIC ENDURANCE

Superheroic Campaigns: Using 10 Active Points of STR or a Power costs 1 END per Phase.

Heroic Campaigns: Using 5 Points of STR costs 1 END per Phase; using 10 Active Points of a Power costs 1 END per Phase.

In Superheroic campaigns, many characters pay END just to maintain their Powers, so END is very important. Superheroes tend to have mighty powers that use up huge quantities of END, and rationing power can be an important consideration in a long battle.

Although END use is usually less of a factor in Heroic campaigns than in Superheroic campaigns, the importance of END varies greatly from campaign to campaign. In modern-day or Science Fiction campaigns, characters use self-powered weapons and devices, and thus rarely run out of END. But in Swords And Sorcery Fantasy, characters typically engage in more HTH Combat, so END is more important.

In most Heroic campaigns, END costs are 1 END for every 5 Active Points of STR, which simulates the prevalence of HTH weapons and combat better, but 1 END for every 10 Active Points of Powers (such as magic spells in a Fantasy campaign). As noted on page 34 of the *HERO System 5 Edition, Revised* rulebook, a character only has to spend END once for his STR in a Phase, no matter how many different ways he uses it; this does not apply to any other abilities or powers.

The GM should feel free to adjust, or even ignore, END costs. He should never require players to keep track of END unless it's important.

OPTIONAL LONG TERM ENDURANCE LOSS

This optional rule involves the use of END over long time periods. It reflects the fact that characters become more and more fatigued if forced to continuously exert END. The Long Term END (LTE) rules are complicated; you should only use them the GM feels they'll enhance the adventure. This rule is particularly useful to keep wizards from casting spells too frequently.

To calculate LTE loss, the character should compare the amount of END used in a Turn to the character's REC. If the END used in a Turn is less than half the character's REC, then the character loses no LTE. If the character uses greater than half his REC, then he begins losing LTE.

Every point of END lost to LTE means one less point of END for a character to use during combat and other situations. If a character's LTE reaches 0, he must stop and rest and cannot take further action until he has at least 1 positive END. Characters cannot use STUN for LTE as they can for standard END.

Example: *Arkelos and his companions are fleeing from some nomads across a desert. Each of them is spending half his REC in END per Turn to move as fast as he can through the arid landscape. As a result, each of them is losing 1 END to LTE every five minutes. Arkelos normally has 40 END when fully rested. After an hour of this pace, he has lost 12 END to LTE, so he only has 28 END to spend when the nomads bring them to bay at an oasis. If Arkelos has to spend more than 28 END, he will have to start using STUN in place of END (although taking Post-Segment 12 Recoveries may delay that unfortunate eventuality for a Turn or two).*

LONG TERM ENDURANCE

(END in Turn)/REC	END lost to Long Term
less than ½	0
½	1 per 5 Minutes
1	1 per Minute
2	1 per Turn
3	2 per Turn
4	4 per Turn
5	8 per Turn

A character does not regain spent LTE with normal Recoveries; Recovering LTE requires longer resting periods. A character recovers his REC in LTE for every five hours of rest; if the character is not resting, he only gets back his REC in LTE once per day. The GM can apportion this over the course of the day if he wants.

Example: *Pulsar (REC 10) tries to blow his way out of his prison cell with his Energy Blast. Since this will take a long time, the GM decides to use the LTE rules. Pulsar's Energy Blast 12d6 costs 6 END to use. Pulsar has a 5 SPD, so he uses 30 END per Turn, assuming he doesn't use any other Powers. 30 is 3x Pulsar's 9 REC, so Pulsar loses 2 LTE each Turn. If he stays active, he'll be able to Recover 10 Long Term END per day, or approximately 1 every 2 hours. If he rests, he can recover 10 LTE every 5 hours, or 2 LTE per hour.*

PUSHING

Occasionally a character needs to exceed the normal limits of his abilities to perform a noble, heroic, or life-saving action. This is called *Pushing.*

GENERAL RULES

Although Pushing differs slightly in Heroic and Superheroic campaigns (see below), some general rules apply to both types of campaigns.

First, a player must declare that his character is Pushing *before* he makes an Attack Roll (or other appropriate roll). If the Attack Roll misses, the character still must expend the full END cost for Pushing.

Second, Pushing is very tiring. When a character Pushes, he must spend 1 END for every Character Point by which he Pushes his STR or Power, in addition to the normal END cost for the un-Pushed ability. For example, a character who Pushes for 10 points of STR spends the usual 2 END for his STR *plus* 10 END for Pushing. Generally, characters can only Push Powers that cost END. They cannot Push powers that never cost END, that are bought to 0 END, or that have Charges (but can Push powers bought to ½ END).

Third, a character cannot more than double a Power's Active Points by Pushing — he can only add as many Active Points to a Power by Pushing as the Power already has. For example, if a character has Swimming 4" (4 Active Points), he can only add 4" (+4 Active Points) to that Power by Pushing it — he can't exert himself and suddenly Swim 14" per Phase.

Fourth, any Advantages on the Pushed ability automatically apply to the dice or effect gained from Pushing — the character doesn't have to reduce the Pushing effect to account for the Advantages. For example, if a character has an Energy Blast 8d6, Armor Piercing and he Pushes it for 10 Character Points, he fires an Energy Blast 10d6, Armor Piercing. A character cannot increase the extent of his Push by applying Limitations to it, nor does Pushing have a greater effect on a Limited power.

Fifth, a character normally cannot Push to obtain extra Noncombat Movement or apply an Adder to a Power. However, the GM may, in *rare* circumstances, allow this.

Sixth, *Pushing is only for heroes and important NPCs.* The average man — even the best athletes and warriors — can *never* Push. Pushing is something only heroes (including all PCs) and their enemies can usually do. For example, an Olympic weightlifter cannot Push his STR to lift more weight and win the gold medal — he's not a hero, so he can't Push, even though this is a crucial activity for him. Only in situations requiring true heroism and sacrifice can a normal person Push, and only then at the GM's discretion. For example, a GM might allow a normal person to Push his STR to lift a burning car off of someone who's trapped beneath it, since that's a situation where lives are at stake and the character is putting his own life at risk to save others.

Seventh, *characters can only use Pushing for crucial, heroic, or life-saving actions.* Characters, even heroes and PCs, cannot Push whenever they want to just to look impressive. Pushing is a last-ditch effort to save the day when all else fails, an enemy has to be Knocked Out *now,* regular-strength attacks are not getting the job done, or something terrible will occur if a character doesn't stop it. Generally, characters should not be allowed to Push every Phase as a matter of course, even if they have the END to do it. The GM determines whether a character can Push in a given situation.

PUSHING IN HEROIC CAMPAIGNS

A character in a Heroic campaign may push his STR or Powers up to 5 Character Points with a successful EGO Roll, +1 Character Point for every 1 point by which he makes the EGO Roll.

The GM may provide a modifier to the character's EGO Roll based on how important the Push is. If Andarra is trying to pull a lever to save the planet Theris from being devoured by a giant space amoeba, the GM might give her a bonus to her EGO Roll. The GM should discourage more casual uses of Pushing by applying a negative modifier to the character's EGO Roll (assuming the GM allows Pushing at all; see above).

PUSHING IN SUPERHEROIC CAMPAIGNS

Pushing in Superheroic campaigns is a much more common occurrence. A Superheroic character can Push the limits of his Power by up to 10 Character Points. This does not require an EGO Roll.

Example: *Defender has to stop a wall from falling down on a helpless old lady. The GM determines that his STR of 30 isn't enough to hold up the wall. Defender Pushes his STR 10 Character Points up to 40 STR, enough for him to hold up the wall long enough for the lady to escape. The END cost for this heroic feat is 3 for a 30 STR and 10 for Pushing the STR to 40 for a total of 13 END.*

The GM may allow Pushes greater than 10 Character Points in unusual circumstances, such as saving the universe.

PRESENCE ATTACKS

Powerful individuals are impressive. Some can be so overwhelming that they can make others stop and listen, or even obey commands. The *HERO System* simulates this with *Presence Attacks*.

A Presence Attack is an attempt to influence the target(s), and can have very useful effects. It affects everyone who can hear the character performing it (or sometimes just see him, depending on the Presence Attack), provided it's intended for them. For example, a Presence Attack made by one of the PCs against Ogre might also affect Ogre's henchmen, but wouldn't affect the other PCs at all. Furthermore, the effects of a Presence Attack are reduced by one level when applied to anyone against whom the attack isn't specifically directed.

Although Presence Attacks are most often used in combat (to make an opponent hesitate or surrender), they have plenty of other uses as well. Out of combat, characters can use them to persuade, inspire, or interrogate NPCs. Villains can use them to terrify innocent people or cow victims. Priests and religious characters can use them to proselytize. The possibilities are virtually endless.

To perform a Presence Attack, a character rolls 1d6 for every 5 points of PRE he has. Compare the total of the Presence Attack to the defender's PRE or EGO (whichever is higher), and then check the Presence Attack Table. The effects of a Presence Attack last as long as the GM deems appropriate.

GMs should modify this roll heavily, according to the exact circumstances. The Presence Attack Modifiers Table lists some modifiers the GM can apply.

As the table indicates, a character's Reputation is extremely important when he makes a Presence Attack. If the target of the Presence Attack knows of the Reputation (determining this may require a roll), it may help or hinder a Presence Attack. If the Reputation supports, or agrees with, the Presence Attack, the Reputation adds bonus dice; if the Reputation and the Presence Attack conflict, it subtracts dice. For example, a character with a Reputation for being *Cruel* (Disadvantage, 11-) will suffer a -2d6 modifier to a Presence Attack to "Surrender and you'll be treated well" — anyone who's heard of the character isn't going to trust that promise. Someone with a Reputation for being *Honest* (Perk, +2d6) is much more likely to succeed with that Presence Attack. Of course, a Reputation doesn't affect Presence Attacks at all if the target of the attack is unaware of the Reputation.

Example: *Arkelos, surrounded by four giant trolls, shouts "Surrender or die!" and shatters a tree with his Fire Bolt spell. He has a PRE of 15 (15/5 = 3d6). He is exhibiting a violent action (+1d6), but is in combat and at a disadvantage against 4 opponents (-2d6). He has three levels in the Perk Reputation: Powerful Wizard (this adds +3d6), and the trolls know of him. He gets a total of 3 + 1 - 2 + 3 = 5d6 for a Presence attack. Arkelos rolls a total of 17. The trolls have PREs of 15. Arkelos's Presence Attack equals their base PRE, so the trolls hesitate and Arkelos can act first.*

Most Presence Attacks are based on intimidation or fear ("Surrender or die!" is a perfect example). However, characters can use them to evoke and manipulate emotions other than fear. A character could use a Presence Attack to command respect, impress an onlooker, get a crowd's attention, or persuade someone to help him. A character could also use a Presence Attack to inspire friendly listeners, thereby improving their morale.

PRESENCE ATTACK TABLE

Presence Attack is	Effect of Attack
Target's PRE or EGO	Target is impressed. He hesitates enough so that the attacker may act before him this Phase, or receives +5 PRE only for purposes of resisting contrary Presence Attacks made that Phase.
Target's PRE or EGO +10	Target is very impressed. He hesitates as above, and only performs a Half Phase Action during his next Phase. He considers very deeply what the attacker says, and may comply with requests or obey orders which seem worthwhile to him. He receives +5 PRE only for purposes of resisting contrary Presence Attacks made that Turn.
Target's PRE or EGO +20	Target is awed. He will not act for 1 Full Phase, is at ½ DCV, and possibly will do as the attacker commands. If he's friendly, he's inspired and may follow the character into danger; he will comply with most requests and obey most orders. He receives +10 PRE only for purposes of resisting contrary Presence Attacks made that Turn.
Target's PRE or EGO +30	Target is cowed. He may surrender, run away, or faint. He is at 0 DCV, and will nearly always follow commands. If he's friendly, he becomes inflamed, and will follow character into any danger, comply with virtually any request, or obey virtually any order.

PRESENCE ATTACK MODIFIERS TABLE

Modifier	Situation or Character's Action
-1d6	Inappropriate setting
-2d6	Very inappropriate setting
-1d6	In combat
-1d6	At a disadvantage
-3d6	Covered
	Presence Attack conflicts with target's Psychological Limitation
-1d6	Moderate Psychological Limitation
-2d6	Strong Psychological Limitation
-3d6	Total Psychological Limitation
	Poor Reputation relevant or contrary to Presence Attack
-1d6	8- Reputation
-2d6	11- Reputation
-3d6	14- Reputation
-4d6	Extreme Reputation
-1 to 3d6	Presence Attack runs against existing moods
Varies	Character has an appropriate *Reputation* Perk (see page 83)
	Presence Attack agrees with target's Psychological Limitation
+1d6	Moderate Psychological Limitation
+2d6	Strong Psychological Limitation
+3d6	Total Psychological Limitation
+1d6	Character makes appropriate Interaction Skill Roll
+2d6	Character makes appropriate Interaction Skill Roll by half or more
+1d6	Target is Surprised
+1d6	Exhibiting a Power or superior technology
+1d6	Violent action
+2d6	Extremely violent action
+3d6	Incredibly violent action
+1d6	Good soliloquy
+2d6	Excellent soliloquy
+3d6	Incredible soliloquy
+1d6	Appropriate setting
+2d6	Very appropriate setting
+2d6	Target is in partial retreat
+4d6	Target is in full retreat/has been captured
+1d6	Need (character appealing for help genuinely seems to need it)
+1d6	Logic (statements are extremely logical and well thought out)

Example: *Howler and her thugs are losing a firefight with some UNTIL agents. Her demoralized henchmen are about to run. Howler, not wanting to face the agents alone, attempts to improve her minions' morale. "Don't worry, we can beat them!" she says. She attacks one of the UNTIL agents with a scream, knocking him through a window and into the street.*

This is a combat situation (-1d6), and one of the thugs has been hurt (-1d6). However, Howler has a Reputation Powerful Supervillainess (Perk, one level [+1d6]), and she exhibited her powers (+1d6) in a violent manner (+1d6). Howler, with her 18 PRE, adds a total of 1d6 to her natural 3½d6 to achieve a 4½d6 Presence Attack. Howler rolls a 21. Since this is equal to the thugs' PRE +10, they are inspired and return to the fight.

Don't overuse Presence Attacks — repeated ones against the same targets are less effective. Each time a character repeats a Presence Attack, he gets -1d6 of effect (-1d6 on the second attack, -2d6 on the third attack, and so forth).

A Presence Attack is an Action which takes no time. However, if the character wishes to perform an Action along with the Presence Attack (like Arkelos blasting the tree, above), that Action takes the amount of time it normally does.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

Here's an example of the way combat works. It pits Hardpoint, a superhero described on *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 500, against a supervillain named Maelstrom (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 502), who has the help of a couple of hired goons (DEX 12, SPD 3) armed with 9mm submachine guns (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 485).

The adventure begins when Hardpoint learns that Maelstrom is robbing the First National Bank. He heads that way immediately, using his Boot-Jets (his Flight) to get there as quickly as possible.

Approaching from the air, Hardpoint notices the bank has a skylight. He decides that's the best way to make a dramatic entrance.

SEGMENT 12

The combat begins on Segment 12, so all the characters have a Phase. Maelstrom is DEX 23, Hardpoint is DEX 25, and the thugs are DEX 12. Therefore Hardpoint goes first, followed by Maelstrom and then the thugs.

Hardpoint makes a Half Move to fly through the skylight; the GM decides that qualifies as a Surprise Move (page 30). Since that's pretty impressive, he decides to open with a Presence Attack (page 146): "All right, Maelstrom, you're busted! You and your boys surrender now and you won't get hurt." Hardpoint's PRE is 20, so he gets a base of 4d6. The GM decides to award Hardpoint +1d6 for his violent action. On the other hand, this is a combat situation, so Hardpoint suffers a -1d6 penalty, for a total of 4 + 1 -1 = 4d6. He rolls the dice and gets an excellent result — 21! Maelstrom has PRE 15, so he's only affected enough for Hardpoint to act first (which he is anyway), but the goons only have PRE 10. They hesitate for a Half Phase this Phase, and so can only take a Half Phase Action.

Since the Presence Attack takes no time (page 18), Hardpoint still has a Half Phase left and decides to attack. He fires his Tangler Bombs at Maelstrom. Hardpoint has a base OCV of 8, and +2 Combat Skill Levels he can apply. He decides to put them both in OCV, for a final OCV of 10. Maelstrom is 4" away from him, so the Range Modifier is -0. Maelstrom has DCV 8. Therefore Hardpoint needs to roll 11 + 10 OCV - 8 DCV = 13 or less to hit. He rolls an 11 and hits! Now he has to roll the 6d6 for his Entangle to determine the BODY. He rolls 6, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1, which means a total of 2 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 0 = 7 BODY. The Entangle has 7 BODY, 6 DEF. That concludes Hardpoint's Phase.

Now it's Maelstrom's Phase. He wants to break free from the Tangler Bombs. Since he's got innate energy powers, he can use one of his Power Blasts to try to break free. He uses Power Blast I, an Energy Blast 12d6. He doesn't have to make an Attack Roll to hit the Entangle, so he just rolls his damage: 6, 6, 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1. The STUN doesn't matter, but the BODY is 2 + 2 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 0 = 13 BODY, a slightly better than average roll. The Entangle has 6 DEF + 7 BODY; after Maelstrom subtracts the 6 DEF he still does 7 BODY damage, so the Power Blast I destroys the Entangle entirely.

Now the thugs act. Since Hardpoint impressed them with his Presence Attack, they use their remaining Half Phase to run behind the tellers' counter and take cover.

That concludes Segment 12. Now everyone gets a Post-Segment 12 Recovery. No one's taken any STUN, but both Hardpoint and Maelstrom have used END, so they add their REC to their END. Since they both have high REC scores (20 and 10, respectively), and each only used 6 END, that puts them back at full END.

SEGMENTS 2, 3, AND 4

Now the next Turn begins. Maelstrom has SPD 6, so he gets Phases in Segments 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12. Hardpoint has SPD 5, so he gets Phases in Segments 3, 5, 8, 10, 12. The thugs have SPD 3, so they get Phases in Segments 4, 8, and 12. (See the SPD Chart, page 16.)

In Segment 2, Maelstrom has a Phase. He decides to (a) activate his Force Field (a Zero-Phase Action), and (b) fire a Power Blast at Hardpoint — his Power Blast I. He has an OCV of 8, with +3 Combat Skill Levels that he can add. Hardpoint is 4" away from him, so the Range Modifier is -0. Maelstrom decides to apply all three Levels to OCV, giving him a final OCV of 11. Hardpoint has a DCV of 8. He doesn't know what Maelstrom's OCV is (the GM keeps that information secret, of course), but he knows Maelstrom is no pushover and doesn't want to take the chance of getting hit. He decides to Abort his Phase in Segment 3 so he can Dodge, which will give him +3 DCV, for a final DCV of 11.

Maelstrom needs to roll 11 + 11 OCV - 11 DCV = 11 or less to hit. He makes his Attack Roll and rolls a 13 — a miss. Hardpoint's Dodge has paid off!

In Segment 3, Hardpoint has a Phase. However, he Aborted this Phase to Dodge in Segment 2, so he does not get to act. However, he retains the +3 DCV bonus from the Dodge until he gets his next Phase (in Segment 5).

In Segment 4, Maelstrom and the thugs all have a Phase — good thing Hardpoint still has that

DCV bonus! Maelstrom fires another Power Blast I, with the same Attack Roll. This time he rolls 11 and hits. Now he rolls his damage: 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1. That's 42 STUN, 13 BODY. Hardpoint has a total of 20 ED, so he takes (42-20 =) 22 STUN and (13-22 =) 0 BODY. His CON is 30, so he's not Stunned (page 113). Now Maelstrom rolls for Knockback (page 123). Ordinarily he would roll 2d6, but Hardpoint is flying, so he only rolls 1d6. He rolls a 5. 13 BODY - 5 = 8, so Hardpoint gets Knocked Back 8" — right into the wall! Maelstrom rolls 8d6 for Knockback damage, getting 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 1, 1 for 27 STUN, 7 BODY. Hardpoint takes 7 STUN and 0 BODY from that, so he's lost a total of 29 STUN this Phase. He has 35 STUN normally, so he's only got 6 STUN left before he's Knocked Out!

Now it's the thugs' turn. They decide to use their submachine guns on full Autofire (5 shots) against Hardpoint. They have DEX 12, for an OCV of 4. Hardpoint is 16" away from them, for a Range Modifier of -4, and has DCV 6 at present — his normal DCV 11 is halved because he took Knockback and is "prone." That means each of the thugs needs 11 + 4 - 4 -6 = 5 or less to hit. They roll 11 and 12, so both of them miss.

SEGMENT 5

In Segment 5, Hardpoint has a Phase. Ordinarily he would have to spend a Half Phase to "get to his feet," but the GM rules that since he's still above ground and can fly, he can combine that with a Half Move. He flies forward 10" (a Half Move), putting him 2" away from Maelstrom and 6" away from the goons. He fires an Pulson Blast at Maelstrom with OCV 8, putting both his Combat Skill Levels into DCV (since he's so low on STUN that he doesn't dare get hit). He needs to roll 11 + 8 - 8 = 11 or less to hit. He rolls a 10 and hits! For damage he rolls 6 + 6 + 6 + 5 + 5 + 5+ 4 + 4 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 2 = 52 STUN, 15 BODY, an excellent roll. Maelstrom subtracts his defenses — 17 ED + 10 ED Force Field — for 25 STUN, 0 BODY. Since Maelstrom only has CON 23, taking 25 STUN damage Stuns him (page 113). At the end of this Phase, all of his powers which aren't Persistent (such as his Force Field) will turn off.

Hardpoint now rolls for Knockback. He rolls 10 on 2d6, so Maelstrom takes 15 - 10 = 5" of Knockback. That Knocks him Back into the teller's counter and he takes 5d6 damage. Hardpoint rolls 5 + 4 + 3 + 1 + 1 = 14 STUN, 3 BODY. Maelstrom's natural PD and Force Field are high enough (total of 23 PD) that he takes no damage from the Knockback.

At the end of the Segment, Maelstrom's Force Field turns off.

SEGMENT 6

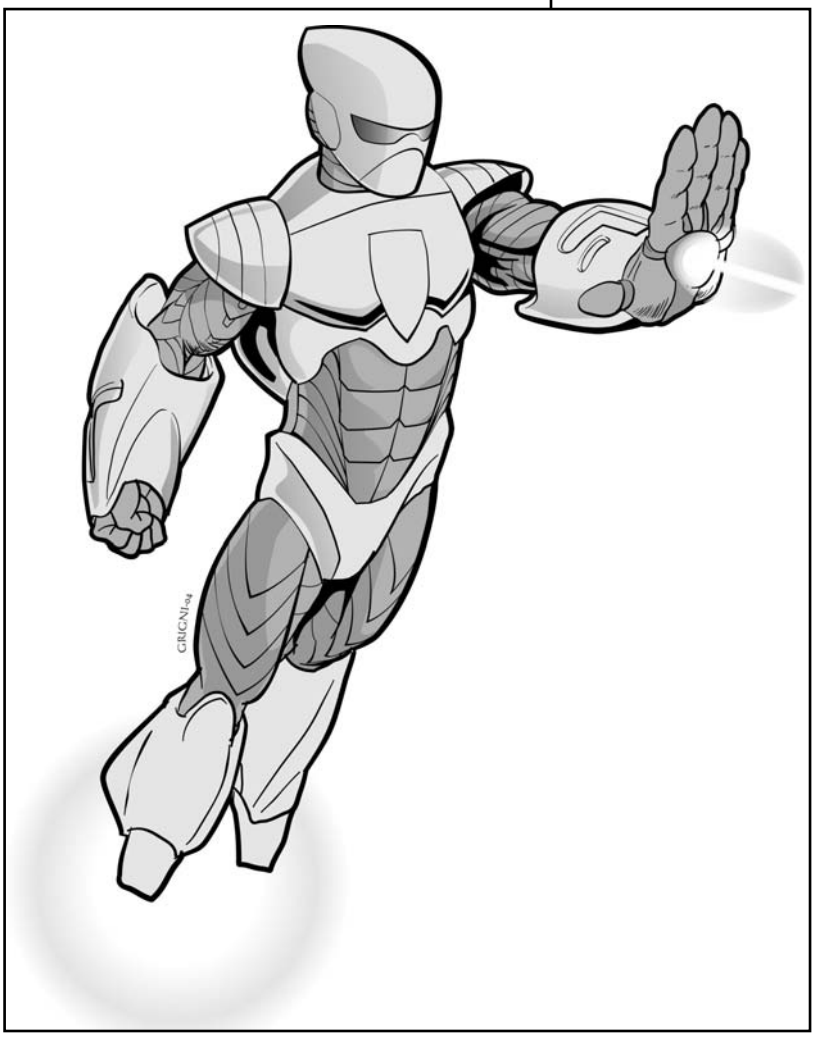
The only character with a Phase in Segment 6 is Maelstrom. Unfortunately, he's Stunned, so he has to spend his entire Phase recovering from being Stunned (page 114). At the end of his Phase, he becomes un-Stunned.

SEGMENT 8

In Segment 8, all four characters have a Phase. Hardpoint (DEX 25) goes first. Since Maelstrom's not yet out, he decides to fire another Pulson Blast. Hardpoint has OCV 8. Maelstrom's DCV would normally be 8, but he's prone (lying on the ground), so it's halved to 4.

At this point, Maelstrom does not have his Force Field active — it shut off when he became Stunned. He could Abort his Phase in Segment 8 to turn it on, or to Dodge, but he's got a Psychological Limitation: Overconfidence. The GM decides Maelstrom's opinion is: "He can't hit me... and even if he can, I can take it!".

Hardpoint needs to roll 11 + 8 - 4 = 15 or less to hit. He rolls an 11 and hits. He rolls 6 + 5 + 5 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 2 + 1 + 1 = 41 STUN, 11 BODY. Maelstrom only has his natural ED of 17, so he takes 24 STUN and 0 BODY. He had already taken 25 STUN in Segment 5, so he's now lost a total of 49 STUN. Unfortunately, he only has 40 STUN, so he's Knocked Out (page 114). As indicated by the Recovery Time Table (page 115), he's not badly Knocked Out (-9 STUN), so he gets to take a Recovery every Phase and on Post-Segment 12 (he doesn't get a Recovery this Segment, even though he has a Phase he hasn't taken yet, because this is the same Segment in which he was Knocked Out; see page 114).



Now the thugs get to act. They try the same thing they did last Phase — full Autofire with their submachine guns against Hardpoint. This time the Range Modifier is only -2 OCV, since they're 6" away from him. That means they need 11 + 4 - 2 - 10 = 3 or less to hit him. One rolls an 11 and misses; the other, to the GM's astonishment, rolls a 3! Using the Autofire rules (page 41), the GM determines that two of the second thug's bullets hit Hardpoint.

The 9mm submachine gun does RKA 1d6+1 damage with a 1d6-1 STUN Multiplier. The thug rolls a 4 for BODY damage for the first bullet, so the attack does 5 BODY. Then he rolls the STUN Multiplier and gets a 4, so the attack does 15 STUN (5 x 3). But Hardpoint has Armor (15 PD) plus 5 PD, so the bullet just bounces off him, doing no damage at all! The thug rolls 2d6 for Knockback (-1d6 because Hardpoint's flying, but +1d6 because he used a Killing Attack) and gets an 8. 5 - 8 = -3, so the attack does no Knockback. The second bullet doesn't do any better — 3 BODY, 9 STUN, and no Knockback.

SEGMENT 10

In Segment 10, Maelstrom and Hardpoint both have an Action. Maelstrom can only take a Recovery, and that occurs at the very end of the Segment.

Hardpoint decides to use his Tangler Bombs on one of the thugs. First he takes a Half Phase Action to move closer to the thug, thus eliminating the Range Modifier. He needs an 11 + 8 - 4 = 15 or less to hit them. He rolls a 10 and hits easily. He rolls 6d6 to determine the BODY of his Entangle: 2 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 0 = 6 BODY, so the thug is caught in a 6 DEF, 6 BODY Entangle. The thug can't use his gun while Entangled (since it's an Obvious, Accessible Focus), and can only hope to do 4 BODY at most with his STR 10, so he's completely immobilized and will remain that way until someone frees him.

Maelstrom applies his REC 10 to his STUN. He was at -9 STUN, he now has 1 STUN. That means he only has 1 END (page 115).

SEGMENT 12

Everyone has a Phase this Segment. Hardpoint attacks the other thug with his Entangle and hits him easily, with results similar to the other thug. Maelstrom's hired goons are now out of the picture.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Maelstrom. But he knows he's weak, so he plays possum and takes another Recovery. He's now at 11 STUN, 11 END.

After Segment 12, everyone gets a Post-Segment 12 Recovery. That puts Hardpoint at 26 STUN and 80 END (he used 18 END last Turn — 6 for using Flight in each of his Phases, and 12 for making two attacks at 6 END each). It puts Maelstrom at 21 STUN, 21 END.

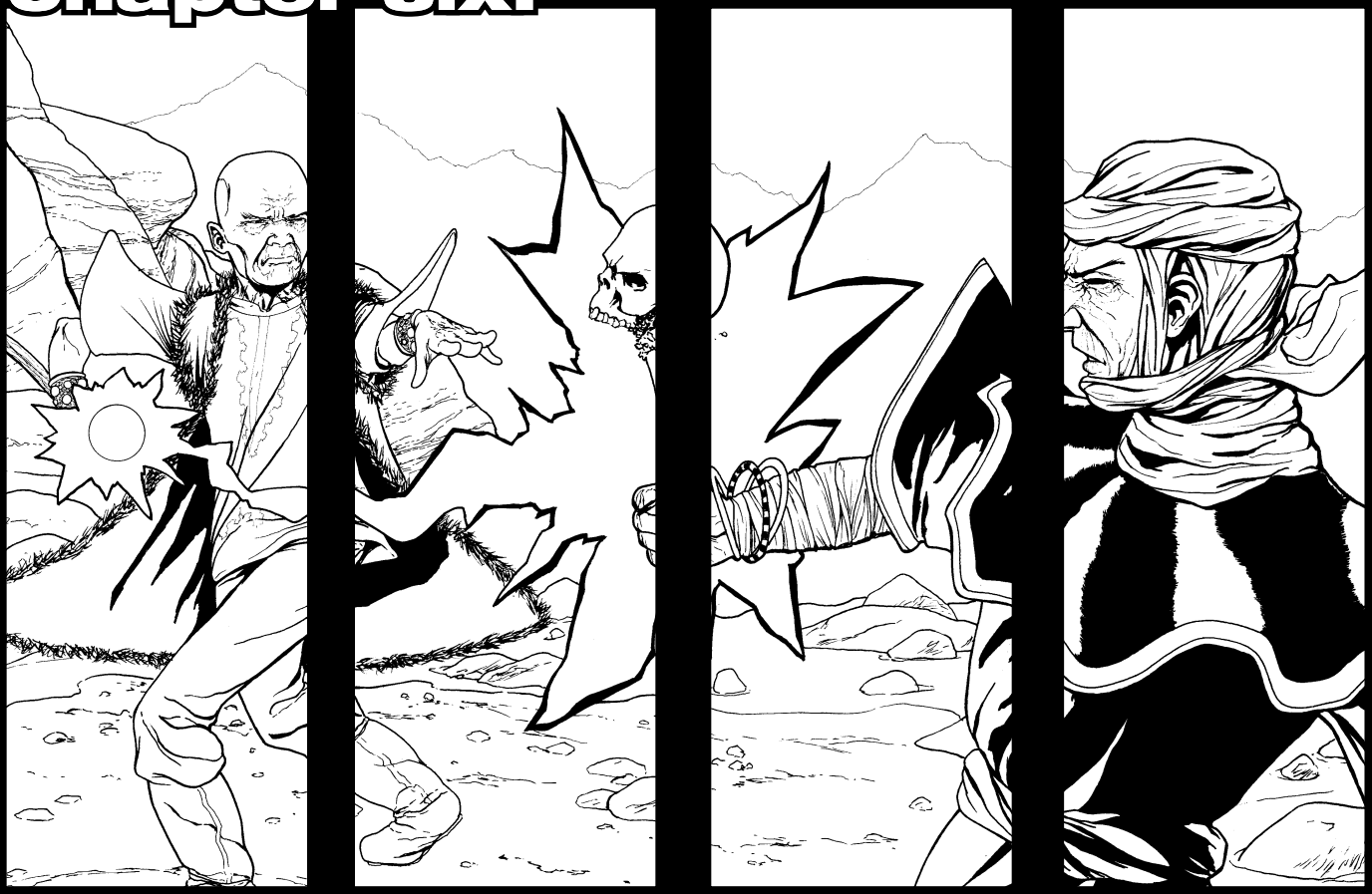
SEGMENT 2

A new Turn begins. In Segment 2, Maelstrom re-activates his Force Field and flees, flying away at 10", which is enough to get him outside the bank.

In Segment 3, Hardpoint pursues him — in fact, he decides to try a Move Through with his Flight 20" to tackle Maelstrom and smash him to the ground. He'll be at -4 OCV (20" movement divided by 5) and -3 DCV, giving him OCV 4, DCV 5. His Combat Skill Levels don't apply because he's not using his Multipower, but he can use his Level with HTH Combat. However, the GM rules that this counts as attacking Maelstrom "from behind," so Maelstrom has only half his DCV (4). Hardpoint needs an 11 + 5 - 4 = 11 or less to hit. He rolls an 11 and hits! He's going to do 8d6 (his STR damage) plus 6d6 (20" divided by 3, which rounds down to 6 because you can't add part of a Damage Class) = 14d6 damage! He rolls 6 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 47 STUN, 13 BODY. Maelstrom subtracts his total Physical Defense of 23 and takes 24 STUN, 0 BODY (Hardpoint takes half damage, or 23 STUN, 0 BODY; he loses 3 STUN after applying his defenses). That leaves Maelstrom at -3 STUN — he's Knocked Out again!

The GM rules that the fight is over, since Hardpoint can inflict more damage or restrain Maelstrom before Maelstrom can get back into fighting shape. Once again Good triumphs over Evil!

chapter six:



ENVIRONMENTAL AND GENRE EFFECTS

UNDERWATER COMBAT

Adventures in some campaigns — such as Fantasy or superhero games where the characters visit underwater civilizations like Atlantis — involve underwater action. Here are some expanded rules for underwater activity in the *HERO System.*

THE UNDERWATER ENVIRONMENT

The underwater environment is very different than the surface environment in ways both obvious and subtle. Characters may find that the biggest danger they face on some underwater missions is not the enemies they fight, but the very water around them.

LIGHT

Sunlight only penetrates the ocean to certain depths. The deepest parts of the ocean are as black as a starless night, with the only light coming from the bioluminescence of creatures adapted to the environment. Additionally, the murkiness of the water inhibits sight. See *Perception And Communication,* below, for rules about making PER Rolls underwater.

PRESSURE

The mass of all the water above a swimmer exerts a crushing pressure. This alone can kill characters even if they can breathe normally underwater.

Earth's average atmospheric pressure at sea level (one atmosphere, or approximately 1000 millibars) is the default for game purposes. At 1 atmosphere or below, a character's normal PD is enough to resist the effects of pressure.

Heavier pressure, such as from diving deep into the sea, can cause injury and death. As of 2004, the free-diving record for humans is to 171 meters, where the pressure is about 17 atmospheres — but without special protection, they can only remain at such pressures for short periods.

Calculating Pressure

As a guideline, on Earth, 10 meters (5") of depth in the ocean equals 1 atmosphere, and every +10 meters (+5") (or fraction thereof) thereafter equals +1 atmosphere. Thus, a character swimming 43 meters below the surface experiences 5 atmospheres of pressure.

For game purposes, 10 atmospheres of pressure is the most an unprotected humans can withstand for extended periods without suffering any negative effects. For each +1 atmosphere (or fraction thereof) thereafter, a character suffers 1d6 Normal Damage, NND Does BODY, per Turn (the damage accrues on Segment 1). For example, at 15.5 atmospheres, a character suffers 6d6 damage per Turn. The defense to the damage is Life Support (Safe Environment: High Pressure).

In games emphasizing greater "realism," Safe Environment (High Pressure) only constitutes a total defense to pressure damage up to 30 atmospheres. Above that, Safe Environment (High Pressure) alone is not enough. At that point, for each +1 atmosphere (or fraction thereof) above 30, a person suffers the damage indicated above (beginning at 1d6, not 21d6) unless he has the proper defense: Safe Environment (High Pressure) *and* a minimum of 1 Resistant PD for every 3 atmospheres of pressure. (Normally the defense to an NND shouldn't vary this way, but in this case it's a realistic and valid way to represent the increasing effects of pressure.) This defense can come from armor, personal force fields, or any other source. Thus, at 31 atmospheres, a character with Safe Environment (High Pressure) and 10 rPD is fine; at 32 atmospheres, he starts taking damage, because his rPD is no longer enough to protect him.

The Bends

Even when the pressure isn't high enough to cause harm, being in a high-pressure environment has other dangers. Nitrogen and other gases dissolve in the bloodstream under pressure. The affliction known as *the bends* (or, more formally, decompression sickness) occurs when divers try to ascend from underwater depths too rapidly — when the pressure is reduced quickly, the dissolved gases form bubbles and expand, which can cause debilitating pain and tissue damage. (For a graphic demonstration of this, shake up a bottle of carbonated soda and open the top — then imagine that happening in human blood veins.)

The effects of the bends are highly variable. Some deep-sea divers have survived dozens of dives with no permanent effects, but others died or were left paralyzed. The only way to avoid the bends is to depressurize slowly, either by gradually ascending through the water or spending time in an artificial pressure-control chamber. Divers descending this far require specialized equipment (including using alternative gas mixes in their breathing apparatus, since highly-pressurized nitrogen is also a powerful narcotic) and at least ten hours of pressure stabilization.

In game terms, for any decrease in pressure of greater than 1 atmosphere per minute, a character must make a CON Roll, with a penalty of -1 for each additional atmosphere of pressure. If he suc-

ceeds, he doesn't suffer from the bends. If he fails, he suffers RKA 1d6 NND Does BODY damage (the defense is Life Support [Safe Environment: High Pressure]). If he fails the roll badly (by 4 or more), the GM might want to increase the damage to 2d6 (or perhaps by +1 point per point the character missed the roll by). He suffers an additional 1 BODY damage per hour until decompressed or returned to the higher pressure.

At the GM's discretion, a character suffering from the bends (*i.e.,* who fail the roll and are subjected to the NND Killing Damage) is physically incapacitated. To take any physical action, he must make an EGO Roll at -4 to withstand the pain (the *Resistance* Talent adds to this roll). If he fails, he cannot take the action. Each additional action requires a similar roll. At the same time, they will suffer a loss of 1 BODY per Hour until decompressed or returned to the higher pressure.

Nitrogen Narcosis

Sometimes called "rapture of the deep," *nitrogen narcosis* occurs when a diver breathes compressed air at depths greater than 100 feet (15"). The nitrogen in the compressed air can have an adverse effect. For every Turn spent below 15", a character breathing compressed air must make a CON Roll. If the roll succeeds, he experiences no ill effects. But if he fails the roll, he starts acting as if he were drunk and suffers the effects of intoxication as described on page 47. In most cases he cannot exercise good judgment (at best, he has to succeed with an EGO Roll to do the "sensible" or "right" thing) — instead, he behaves in a wildly erratic manner, possibly becoming reckless or silly. For example, he might become overconfident in battle, or simply wander away from the fighting.

To "cure" the effects of nitrogen narcosis, a character must go to (or be taken to) a lesser depth. Once the hero reaches a depth of 15" or less and takes a Post-Segment 12 Recovery (he lacks the judgment to take a Recovery voluntarily), the effects of nitrogen narcosis disappear.

The bends only presents a problem for divers who use regular compressed air. Special alternate gas mixes are available that eliminate the problem entirely. On the other hand, divers who use pure oxygen in their SCUBA gear suffer similar effects to nitrogen narcosis regardless of depth. Furthermore, breathing more than 1.6 atmospheres of pure oxygen affects the central nervous system. This causes the character to suffer convulsions... which means that if someone's not there to put his regulator back in his mouth, he'll drown before he can recover.

Handling nitrogen narcosis in the game is difficult — it's not just an excuse to act silly, it's something to be roleplayed properly — so some GMs may prefer not to use these rules at all if they don't think it's appropriate for their players. One quick and easy way to handle it for some characters is to exaggerate their Psychological Limitations (and any other Disadvantages that represent a character's mental state, such as some Enrageds and Rivalries). This might not work well for Psychological Limita-

tions like *Code Versus Killing* or *Vengeful,* but can be a lot of roleplaying fun when a character has a phobia, is in love with another PC, or the like.

TEMPERATURE

Water conducts heat away from the body much more efficiently than air, meaning that divers find themselves feeling the effects of cold underwater more rapidly. The waters surrounding Atlantis are extremely cold (Temperature Level -1 or -2, typically) and quickly sap the strength and energy of anyone unused to them. Characters without Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold), whether innate or provided by equipment, lose REC and Long-Term END pursuant to the Temperature Level rules (see pages 441-42 of the *HERO System 5 Edition, Revised* rulebook, but ignore any losses for being in Temperature Level 1). Special insulated diving suits exist that can counteract the cold (add +1 Temperature Level for a 3mm insulated suit, +2 Levels for a 6mm insulated suit, and +3 Levels for a drysuit).

BREATHING

The main consideration most characters will have when they contemplate a visit to Atlantis is how they'll breathe underwater. Some characters may already have the innate ability to breathe underwater, but others will have to rely on outside resources.

First and foremost, characters can use SCUBA gear or other underwater breathing equipment (see *Divers And Diving,* below). In a "realistic" game, the amount of oxygen they can carry in a single tank severely hampers their ability to use this method for long adventures. But in a setting that features comic book technology, such as the Champions Universe, it's possible to have SCUBA-like gear that allows for an unlimited amount of breathing time... but of course, using gear, no matter how sophisticated, leaves characters vulnerable to losing that gear, having it break or malfunction, and so forth.

Alternately, characters may be able to use magic to breathe underwater. Atlantean mages know several spells allowing Landers to breathe underwater, though getting to the mages to have them cast those spells may prove difficult. In game terms, the GM has two options. The first, and easiest, is to consider the "Breathe Water" spell a plot device — since it's necessary to let the PCs adventure underwater, just give it to them somehow and don't worry about the game specifics. Second, the GM can create the spell in *HERO System* terms so that he'll know its exact game effects (see the accompanying sidebar for some examples).

Characters who find themselves unable to breathe underwater begin to drown (see page 142 for rules about drowning).

PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION

Characters may have difficulty perceiving while underwater, or communicating with each other.

SIGHT

Water blocks out sunlight. For photosynthesis purposes, sunlight reaches to as much as 77-92 meters (250-300 feet, or 39-46"), but it starts to lose reds and yellows at about 9 meters (30 feet, or 5"). At 18 meters (60 feet, or 9") and below, all the light is blue-green. Below the photosynthesis level, all living beings are animals or organisms that subsist on something other than sunlight. Besides the loss of light, the other factor affecting visibility underwater is murkiness — materials in the water (particulate matter, small organisms, algae, and the like).

In game terms, the GM should require characters involved in combat underwater to make PER Rolls when they change targets or need to notice events at a distance. The accompanying table provides a basic modifier based on depth (and thus on darkness), with an additional modifier for murkiness. Atlantis is deep enough to impose the -4 penalty for depth; the waters around it are usually Average murkiness.

Infrared And Ultraviolet Perception; Nightvision

Heat dissipates quickly in water, so Infrared Perception (usually bought as a form of Sight) is limited. Characters using Infrared Perception suffer an additional -2 per range doubling for using it at a distance (this is cumulative with standard Range Modifiers).

Nightvision and Ultraviolet Perception are not affected underwater, though Ultraviolet Perception becomes useless below the point where sunlight can penetrate.

UNDERWATER VISIBILITY

Depth	Sight PER Roll Modifier
1-4"	-0
5-8"	-1
9-16"	-2
17-32"	-3
33" or deeper	-4

Conditions	Additional Sight PER Roll Modifier
Very murky (muddy river or lake)	-3
Murky (quarry lake, heavy particulates)	-2
Average (typical ocean)	-1
Clear (clear ocean)	-0
Very clear (some Carribean waters)	-0

Characters with Nightvision suffer no penalty due to depth, but do suffer murkiness penalties.

The Range Modifier for PER Rolls underwater increase to -3 per range doubling instead of the ordinary -2.

HEARING

Sound travels more easily underwater, but frequency dropouts (and surface characters' unfamiliarity with how water affects sound) can make understanding speech, pinpointing the origin/direction of a sound, and the like more difficult. All Hearing PER Rolls are at -3; this increases to -4 if what the character wants to do is locate the origin or source of a sound, but improve to +1 if all the character needs to do is hear a sound (rather than identify or locate it). Additionally, the GM may require characters to make unmodified Hearing PER Rolls to understand speech in languages not designed for underwater use, even though normally characters don't make Hearing PER Rolls just to talk.

If a character fails a Hearing PER Roll underwater, it doesn't necessarily mean he didn't hear the sound (particularly if it's speech). Instead, it may mean that he heard it, but can't understand or identify it at all.

Sonar

Underwater Hearing PER Roll rules do not apply to sonar. It works better underwater; not only does it not suffer the standard penalties, it actually gets a +2 PER Roll bonus. However, sonar used underwater cannot perceive objects above the surface of the water — the surface bounces the sonar signal back to the character, effectively "blinding" him as to all things beyond it. And don't forget that sonar isn't foolproof — for example, thermal layers in the water can create PER Roll penalties, and sonar may read a group of small objects that are close together (such as a school of fish) as one big object.

RADIO

Water tends to obstruct radio signals. All Radio Perception and Radio Perception/Transmission both suffer a -5 penalty to PER Rolls. HRRP, which covers more bands, suffers only a -3 penalty. Radar does not work at all underwater.

SMELL/TASTE

Characters who can breathe underwater can make PER Rolls for Smell/Taste without penalty; those who can't are limited to smelling or tasting whatever's in the air they're breathing. In either case, shifting water currents make Tracking by scent quite difficult. Unless the water's still, Tracking Smell/Taste PER Rolls are made at a -2 penalty.

COMMUNICATION

Closely related to perceiving things is the ability to communicate with other people. Being underwater often makes communication difficult. In addition to the perception problems described above, characters may have trouble speaking because they've got SCUBA mouthpieces in their mouths (though special full-face masks with built-in radios that allow communication are available), have trouble seeing hand signals or gestures because of silt or murk, and have difficulty sending and receiving radio signals (see above). The GM should keep the environment in mind and require characters to make PER Rolls or INT Rolls to understand one another, if appropriate.

MOVING UNDERWATER

In the water, Swimming becomes the default form of movement in place of Running. Thus, for most characters, that means they won't be able to move more than 2" per Phase (4" Noncombat). Characters who've bought the *Usable [As Second Mode Of Movement]* Advantage for Running, Flight, or the like so they can use that Movement Power as if it were Swimming (see page 124 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook) can use that power underwater without restriction.

RUNNING

Characters can only have Running 1" underwater (2" Noncombat, ½" Half Move). This assumes they're on the ocean floor or some other surface they can actually run on; if they're in mid-water, they can't run at all. Even then, the surface may be so slippery that the GM requires a character to make DEX Rolls or Breakfall rolls every Phase to keep his feet.

At the GM's option, characters with significantly more than the standard Running 6" (such as some speedsters) can Run underwater at one-sixth their normal Combat Movement rate.

LEAPING

Characters can only Leap underwater if they have a solid surface to push off of (such as bedrock on the ocean floor, the side of a submarine, the top of an Atlantean building, or the like).

A character's Leaping speed is halved while he's underwater. The GM may wish to reduce this even further if he has poor footing, if the shape of his body would increase drag through the water, or the like.

For long leaps, due to the problems of perceiving underwater (see *Perception And Communication,* above), characters may have a much harder time perceiving the target hex.

FLIGHT

Unless Flight is bought *Usable As Swimming* (*a.k.a.* Usable Underwater), it doesn't work at full effect underwater — it depends on the power's special effects. At best, Flight works at half speed in the water; this would apply to graviton manipulation, telekinetic levitation, and other forms of Flight that don't involve any physical motion or effort on the character's part. For Flight involving wings or the like, the GM may restrict a character to one-quarter speed. Flight based on projecting flame or energy behind the character for a "rocket effect" probably won't work at all. The final decision is up to the GM.

GLIDING

Gliding doesn't work at all underwater unless it's bought Usable As Swimming.

SWINGING

Swinging usually doesn't work at all underwater unless it's bought Usable As Swimming. However, the GM might allow a character to Swing 1" in appropriate circumstances, and characters still may be able to use their swinglines to pull themselves up the side of underwater buildings or cliffs, across underwater chasms, and so on.

TELEPORTATION

Teleportation with the *Must Pass Through Intervening Space* Limitation suffers the same restrictions as Running when used underwater. Other forms of Teleportation typically work at full effect underwater, but characters and GMs must keep two things in mind. First, due to the problems of perceiving underwater (see *Perception And Communication,* above), characters may have a much harder time perceiving the target hex.

Second, and more importantly, Teleporting into an area filled with water constitutes "Teleporting into a solid object," requiring the character to roll on the Teleportation Damage Table as described on page 29. This may effectively make Teleportation useless underwater for many characters. (If the GM finds this too restrictive, he can either consider Teleporting into water to be the same as Teleporting into air, or only invoke the Teleporting into solid objects rules occasionally [say, on an 11- roll each time the character Teleports].)

TUNNELING

Characters cannot Tunnel through the water. However, they can Tunnel normally through the ocean floor, the walls of an Atlantean building, or similar underwater structures/objects.

Divers And Diving

Characters without Life Support powers or some other way to breathe underwater must rely on SCUBA gear. The current depth record for divers using SCUBA gear and exotic gas mixtures is a little over 1,000 feet (about 305 meters, or 152"). However, anything deeper than 40 meters (130 feet, or 20") is "technical" diving (as opposed to recreational diving), and typically requires greater experience and skill, and/or better equipment.

SCUBA EQUIPMENT	
Effect:	**Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing)**
Target/Area Affected:	**Self**
Duration:	**Constant**
Range:	**Self**
Charges:	**1 Continuing Fuel Charge**
Breakability:	**2 DEF**

Description: SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, or simply SCBA for models designed for out-of-water use) equipment allows a swimmer to remain underwater for long periods of time by breathing oxygen supplied by tanks worn on the back. When the user exhales, he creates a trail of bubbles.

If an oxygen tank is punctured, the remaining oxygen is released all at once, causing the tank to explode. This does RKA 1d6, Explosion damage per 10 minutes of air left in the tank.

Game Information: *Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing) (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

1) Rebreather: A rebreather is an improved form of SCUBA technology, usable by characters who have TF: SCUBA. Unlike SCUBA gear, it does not create a trail of bubbles to give away the swimmer's position. Instead of releasing the swimmer's exhaled air, a rebreather recirculates, purifies, and supplements it with fresh oxygen, thus allowing the user to breathe it again. This has the additional effect of extending the time the user can remain underwater, but also tends to limit him to dives of no more than about 30 feet (5", or up to 7" for no more than about five minutes). Change to: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing), Invisible Power Effects (leaves no bubble trail; +¼) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 2 Hours; -0). Total cost: 6 points.

2) Super-SCUBA Equipment I: This Champions Universe version of SCUBA equipment is smaller, slimmer, lighter-weight, and can last for up to a month without needing additional air supply. Change to 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 1 Month; -0). Total cost: 5 points.

3) Super-SCUBA Equipment II: This form of Super-SCUBA gear attaches to the character in such a way that it's much harder to remove. As Super-SCUBA Equipment I, but change OAF (-1) to OIF (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

SWIMFINS

Effect:	**Swimming +2"**
Target/Area Affected:	**Self**
Duration:	**Constant**
Range:	**Self**
END Cost:	**1**
Breakability:	**1 DEF**

Description: Swimfins are worn on the feet. They expand the "surface area" of the foot, allowing the character to propel himself through the water more quickly by moving his legs.

Game Information: *Swimming +2" (2 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 1 points.*

Options:

1) Attached Swimfins: Some superheroes have special swimfins that attach to their costumes in a way that makes them much harder to remove. For example, a powered armor hero might have special swimfins that fold out from his boots. Change OAF (-1) to OIF (-½). Total cost: 1 point.

UNDERWATER SCOOTER

Effect:	**Swimming 10"**
Target/Area Affected:	**Self**
Duration:	**Constant**
Range:	**Self**
Charges:	**1 Continuing Fuel Charge**
Breakability:	**1 DEF**

Description: This handheld device is basically a small propeller in a casing. The character holds it and it pulls him through the water at high speed and without tiring him.

Game Information: *Swimming 10" (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), Does Not Add To Base Swimming 2" (-0), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 5 points.*

GAME ELEMENTS

Some elements of the *HERO System* work differently, or don't work at all, underwater.

Skills

Unless noted otherwise below, characters can use Skills normally underwater. As always, the GM may impose modifiers to reflect existing circumstances.

Characters born and bred in underwater environments (such as Atlanteans) are assumed to have learned "underwater" versions of their Skills, and to use equipment appropriate for the underwater environment. If they try to use their Skills or equipment in the air, they may experience difficulties of their own.

EQUIPMENT-ORIENTED SKILLS

Skills that require equipment, or usually involve equipment, may not work well underwater if the equipment isn't adapted for underwater use. For example, lockpicks work just as well underwater as on the surface, but the makeup and prostheses used with Disguise melt away or fall off when the character submerses himself in water. Characters may have to obtain appropriate underwater equipment to use certain Skills (like Disguise) underwater. Conversely, Atlantean characters may need "surface versions" of their typical underwater gear if they venture onto land.

INTERACTION SKILLS

If characters cannot easily communicate underwater (see *Perception And Communication,* above), they may find it harder to use Interaction Skills. The GM should impose penalties of -2 to -5, as appropriate.

PERCEPTIVE SKILLS

Many Skills require the character to perceive something (*e.g.,* Lipreading), or require the "target" of the Skill to be able to perceive the character (*e.g.,* Acting, Disguise, or Mimicry). If appropriate, the GM may impose the standard underwater PER Roll penalties (see *Perception And Communication,* above) to such rolls.

ACROBATICS

Characters generally can't use Acrobatics underwater; the water impedes their motion too much. At the GM's option, a character can succeed with an Acrobatics maneuver if he makes his roll at -5. The GM may choose not to apply this penalty if the character has either (a) the *Aquatic Movement* form of Environmental Movement (see below), or (b) has bought his Running with the *Usable As Swimming* Advantage.

Characters who are native-born underwater dwellers (such as Atlanteans) can perform Acrobatics underwater — *Aquabatics,* if you will — without penalty, as if they were in air. However, if they try to use their Acrobatics in air, they suffer the same penalties a surface-dweller does underwater, unless

they buy the *Surface Movement* form of Environmental Movement (see below) or some other ability to negate this problem.

BREAKFALL

Breakfall is *easier* to use underwater, because water slows down movement. Characters can use the Skill normally and usually receive a +2 bonus to rolls.

On the other hand, Atlantean characters have trouble using Breakfall in the air because they're not used to the way they move in a non-liquid environment. They suffer a -2 penalty to all Breakfall rolls unless they buy the *Surface Movement* form of Environmental Movement (see below) or some other ability to negate this problem.

CRIMINOLOGY, FORENSIC MEDICINE

Water quickly washes away or alters trace evidence of a crime. Therefore these Skills may often prove useless... or at the very least, suffer -3 or greater penalties.

DEMOLITIONS

If an explosive requires fire or heat to ignite/detonate, it won't work underwater unless the character has some Keto's Flame or other underwater "fire." Water may also prevent electrically-detonated explosives from working.

FAST DRAW

It's tough to move really fast underwater. This Skill suffers a -2 penalty.

GAMBLING

Since the Atlanteans don't have paper, most of their gambling involves dice games (using dice carved of heavy stone and "rolled" by dropping them down a chute) or sports betting; card games are mostly restricted to the nobility, who use cards made of thin metal foil.

HIGH SOCIETY

Surface-dwellers who use High Society in Atlantis suffer a -2 penalty due to cultural and physical differences (the GM may reduce or eliminate this penalty after the character has time to adapt to Atlantean culture, and should remove it entirely for characters with appropriate KSs). Atlanteans suffer the same penalty in surface society.

LANGUAGE

Speaking underwater may require characters to learn a special language. For example, in the Champions Universe, the Atlanteans speak their own language, as described on page 16 of *Hidden Lands*.

MARTIAL ARTS

See *Underwater Combat,* below, for expanded rules on using Combat and Martial Maneuvers underwater.

MIMICRY

Mimicry depends on the ability to communicate and to perceive, both of which are difficult underwater. At a minimum, Mimicry rolls suffer the standard Hearing PER Roll penalty described above under *Perception And Communication.* However, if a character succeeds with his Mimicry roll, he may be able to take advantage of the fact that surface-dwellers can't always hear clearly and aren't aware of exactly how things should sound in the water. If appropriate, the GM may impose an additional penalty on the target's Hearing PER Roll to determine that the mimicked sound is false.

TRACKING

Characters cannot use Tracking to follow someone who's swimming through the water. Tracking only works underwater if the character can follow footprints or other marks on the ocean floor, Atlantean flagstones, or the like. Even then, the motion of the water may quickly obliterate or alter tracks; the GM can impose a -1 to -3 penalty, as appropriate.

VENTRILOQUISM

Because sound travels through water more easily than it does through air, characters find this Skill easier to use. The distance penalty for Ventriloquism underwater is only -1 per 3" (instead of the usual -1 per 1").

Talents

Characters who spend a lot of time underwater often buy the Aquatic Movement form of the *Environmental Movement* Talent to eliminate the combat penalties associated with being underwater (see *Underwater Combat,* below). Atlantean characters all get this Talent as part of their Package Deal (in an all-Atlantis campaign, the GM should consider just giving it to them for free, since underwater is their default environment).

Aquatic Movement doesn't allow surface-dwelling characters to move at greater speed underwater — they're still limited to Running 1", as described above. However, it does eliminate the penalties for using some Skills, as described above.

Atlantean characters sometimes suffer penalties if they try to use some Skills in the air, since they're not used to that environment. If they want to act on the surface without those Skill penalties, they can buy a different form of Environmental Movement: *Surface Movement*. It costs 3 points, and does for undersea dwellers part of what Aquatic Movement does for landfolk — eliminates Skill Roll penalties associated with being out of the water.

Powers By Special Effect

Characters with powers based on certain special effects may, at the GM's option, find that their powers work differently underwater. Here are some recommended changes for certain categories of powers.

Many of the special effects described below become more or less effective in water. This is normally expressed as a percentage (such as "Pulson powers only have 50% effect underwater"). For ease of play, just add or subtract the appropriate number of dice, points of defense, or the like — don't bother recalculating Active/Real Points or anything like that.

If a power becomes more effective underwater, or gains an Advantage it wouldn't ordinarily have, this does not increase the END cost the character pays to use the power. He pays the standard END cost for it; the extra effect or Advantage is "free."

ACID

Most manifestations of acid-based powers are liquid in form and dissipate easily in water. Indeed, many acid attacks are neutralized entirely by contact with water, or may even have a single reaction immediately upon contact. This might be a dangerous surprise to the user, if the effect goes off directly in front of him, or involves acid on his skin!

As a general rules, it's easiest for the GM to assume that water neutralizes and dissipates dangerous acids. When characters use acid attacks underwater, reduce the attacks to half effect. Similarly, acid-based defenses usually provide only half as much protection as normal. See page 8 of *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* for more rules about acid powers generally.

AIR AND WIND

Depending on the exact special effect of an air or wind power, it may be completely useless underwater. Air or wind powers that involve manipulating existing air have little or nothing to work with, and so usually have no effect at all. Air or wind powers that involve creating air lose most of their effectiveness because they create bubbles that harmlessly dissipate and float to the surface — at most, such powers have half effect.

A hero who can control masses of air may be able to bring a large "bubble" of it underwater with him, allowing him to breathe (at least for a short time) and providing a potential area of safety from water-dwellers.

DENSITY ALTERATION

Characters whose powers have the special effect of making the character lighter or less dense may find that this affects their bouyancy underwater (though this won't be a problem if they become Desolidified, since then the water just passes right through them). The GM should assign a STR rating and speed (in inches per Segment) to the water currents in the character's location. Every Phase, the lighter than normal character has to win a STR Roll Versus STR Roll Contest to remain in place — if he fails, he gets swept in the direction of the current for the current's inches of "movement" every Segment until he gets another Phase and can try to win another STR Roll Contest. (Of course,

the GM can use this same method for characters of normal mass, if the current's strong enough!)

ELECTRICITY

Pure water makes a fine insulator — but characters aren't likely to encounter pure water outside of a laboratory setting. Impure water, such as lake or river water, is an excellent *conductor* of electricity, and salt water's even better. This has several effects in game terms.

First, electrical attacks become more powerful. In fresh water, they're 25% more effective; in salt water, they're 30% more effective.

Second, Ranged electrical attacks (such as Energy Blasts or RKAs defined as a "lightning bolt"), or any other attack which involves channeling or projecting electricity through the water (as opposed to just touching a target with it) acts as if it had the *Area Of Effect (Line)* Advantage. Alternately, it may act as if it has the *Explosion* Advantage; this is most appropriate for attacks that propel something (like a speargun) through the water which then emits electricity when it approaches or contacts the target.

Third, electrical defenses become more powerful, just like attacks: +25% better in fresh water; +30% in salt water. At the GM's option, a defense that surrounds a character with an electric field, like many electricity Force Fields, also becomes a Damage Shield (typically doing RKA 1d6 damage) when used underwater.

Fourth, characters using electricity powers without sufficient insulation (or Personal Immunity) may risk taking damage from their own attacks. At the GM's option, every Phase a character uses an electricity power, the GM rolls 3d6. If he rolls 11-, the character experiences no problems. If he rolls 12 or above, the character gets shocked by his own power — take 25% of the Active Points in the most expensive power and use it to "buy" an RKA, then apply the RKA's damage to the character with no defense (except defenses bought to apply only against electricity). If the character uses more than one electricity power in a Phase, reduce the roll by 1 for every additional power after the first.

Example: *Thunderbolt has electrical powers. In his Phase in Segment 12, he uses two: his Force Field (15 PD/25 ED) and his Energy Blast 12d6. If he were only using one, the GM would roll 11-, but since it's two, he rolls 10-. He rolls 13 and fails. Therefore Thunderbolt takes RKA damage equal to 25% of the most expensive electricity power in use — the EB, with 60 Active Points. Thus, he takes (60 x .25 =) 15 points' worth of RKA damage, or 1d6.*

FIRE AND HEAT

If a character's fire powers require oxygen for combustion (as almost all fire powers do), they cannot function underwater. Fire with other special effects — such as mystic flames, or some chemical fires — work normally.

Even if fire powers don't work as intended, a manifestation of intense heat may convert the water in an area to steam. This might inflict burns (see page 248 of *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* for some suggested steam powers) before the steam dissipates into bubbles and rises to the surface.

Smoke-based powers usually work normally underwater.

HYPERSENSES

See *Perception And Communication,* above, for rules about perceiving underwater. Characters with hypersenses may have a slightly easier time than most characters, but the water plays hob with their senses, too.

ICE AND COLD

Ice and cold powers can have some unusual effects underwater.

First, remember that ice, even large masses of it, is buoyant — in other words, it floats. When characters create ice for an attack (such as many types of Ice Blast or Ice Darts), a defense (such as an Ice Wall, or Ice Armor), or as a form of movement (like Ice Slides), the following rules apply:

—the Range Modifier for Ranged attacks is *doubled,* to represent the fact that the ice starts to bob and rise in the water as soon as it's created

—static structures or objects made of ice, such as Ice Walls, rise to the surface at the rate of 3" per Segment beginning in the Segment after they're created unless they're anchored to something solid (such as the ocean floor or an undersea cliffside)

—a character who protects himself with Ice Armor (*i.e.,* a "suit" of ice that protects him from attacks) will rise just like a static structure unless he has Density Increase or some other way to weigh himself down; the same applies to persons trapped in "block of ice" Entangles or the like

—characters using Ice Slides (a form of Running) are limited to only 25% of their normal inches of movement, since the slides start to rise and break up as soon as they're created, forcing the character to devote time and effort to keeping them solid enough for him to move on

Characters whose powers involve creating intense cold may find that activating such powers underwater causes the water to freeze around them. At the GM's option, every Phase a character uses an ice/cold power underwater, the GM rolls 3d6. If he rolls 11-, the character experiences no problems. If he rolls 12 or above, the character traps himself in an ice Entangle — take 25% of the Active Points in the most expensive power and use it to "buy" an Entangle, then apply the Entangle to the character. If the character uses more than one ice/cold power in a Phase, reduce the roll by 1 for every additional power after the first.

But all is not gloom and doom for ice projectors. At the GM's option, the vast amounts of water available for them to freeze underwater may increase the effects of their powers. An attack that involves creating ice often gains 1-2 additional Damage Classes — and perhaps more, depending on the nature of the attack (for example, a block of

ice used to Entangle or ram someone gets much bigger and heavier than normal, and so might gain +3-4 DCs). An ice-based defense may gain +1-2 points of defense. An ice/cold-based Change Environment effect is often 25-50% larger than normal. As always, the GM should determine the exact effects based on the circumstances, common sense, dramatic sense, and game balance.

LIGHT

Water diffuses visible light, so it weakens most powers with a Light special effect. Light-based attacks, including laser beams and many Sight Group Flashes, automatically have the *Reduced By Range* Limitation when used underwater. If the power already has that Limitation, double the number of DCs subtracted at each Range increment. If the water's particularly murky or cloudy, the GM might want to increase the DCs subtracted per Range increment by 1.

Light-based defense powers, such as a Force Field, usually lose 25% of their effectiveness. The GM should make a final determination based on the nature of the power.

Powers involving non-visible light — ultraviolet and infrared — work differently. Ultraviolet light powers aren't affected by being underwater at all; they work just as well in the water as in the air. Infrared light attacks have a maximum range of 2", but can't affect targets beyond that at all; infrared light defenses lose 50% of their effectiveness.

At depths below 77-92 meters (250-300 feet, or 39-46"), there's usually insufficient light for powers that require ambient light to work, such as any power with Limitations like *Does Not Work In Darkness* or *Only Works In Sunlight.* See *Perception And Communication,* above, for more information.

MENTAL AND PSIONIC

Mental and psionic powers work normally underwater, but characters may have difficulty establishing Line Of Sight to the target. See *Perception And Communication,* above, for rules about perceiving underwater.

SONIC

Since sound travels more easily through water (about 4.5 times faster, in fact), Sonic powers become more effective beneath the waves.

Sonic non-Ranged attacks typically gain as much as 25% additional power. Sonic Ranged attacks usually automatically gain the Advantage *Area Of Effect (Cone)* (the attack retains its normal Range). If the character doesn't want that effect (*i.e.,* he wants to attack more precisely, so he hits only one target), he may make a *Power* Skill Roll at +2, or if the GM prefers an INT Roll, to control his power and keep it from "spreading." Alternately or in addition, the GM might increase the Damage Classes of a Sonic Ranged attack by as much as 25%.

Sonic defense powers become 20% more effective. Other Sonic powers may gain as much as 10-20% effectiveness, at the GM's option.

TECHNOLOGY, GADGETS, AND DEVICES

Many technological devices aren't intended to work underwater. Unless noted otherwise, assume that any electronic or similar technological device does not work underwater. If the device provides Life Support (Expanded Breathing or Self-Contained Breathing), then it and any other devices that are part of it are considered "watertight" and thus able to function normally underwater. At the GM's option, a character can declare that his devices are watertight. The GM may want to charge 1 or more Character Points per device for this (as part of the device's Active Point cost) to keep characters from gratuitously making all their gear watertight.

Devices are subject to the crushing pressure of the depths (page 152) just like characters. Even if a device is waterproof, taking it too far down may damage or destroy it unless the character buys Life Support (Safe Environment: High Pressure) for it. Foci that provide that type of Life Support automatically have it themselves; at the GM's option, so do Inaccessible Foci carried by a character who has Safe Environment: High Pressure himself.

Aquadynamic Devices

Large devices that aren't specifically designed to be aquadynamic (*i.e.,* to move through the water as easily as possible) may interfere with a character's ability to swim. Examples include many suits of powered armor, the enormous weapons wielded by some gigantic characters, blaster cannons, and any Focus with the *Bulky* Limitation. The GM should multiply the device's weight for the purposes of determining Encumbrance's effect on movement to represent the "drag" it creates. If the device provides the character with STR, the GM may not want to count that STR for purposes of determining whether the character's Encumbered (and if so, how badly).

A device is automatically considered "aquadynamic" if it provides the character with any inches of Swimming. At the GM's option, a character can declare that his devices are aquadynamic. The GM may want to charge 1 or more Character Points per device for this (as part of the device's Active Point cost) to keep characters from gratuitously making all their gear aquadynamic.

WATER

At the very worst, Water powers have their normal effect when used underwater. At the GM's option, using Water powers underwater might make them more powerful — as much as 25% more effective. The GM may prefer to express this by adding an Advantage, such as *Area Of Effect (One Hex), Double Knockback,* or *No Range Modifier* instead of just adding Damage Classes. Increasing the effectiveness of Water powers is particularly appropriate for powers that draw on ambient water, as opposed to ones where the character somehow generates the water himself.

WEATHER

There's no weather to speak of underwater, so characters with weather manipulation abilities may not always have much effect beneath the surface — there's no way to generate a breeze or raise a fog. (In some cases, the character may still be able to affect the weather above the body of water he's in.) However, at the GM's option, there may be ways for a character to use a reasonable "substitute" ability. Instead of creating a fog to interfere with his enemies' vision, maybe he generates a field of bubbles or stirs up water currents.

Weather powers that have additional special effects — such as wind or lightning — follow the rules for those types of abilities, as described above.

Powers By Category And Type

Regardless of special effect, some powers work differently underwater than in the air.

CONSTANT POWERS

Don't forget that characters ordinarily have to maintain Line Of Sight to a Constant Power to keep it in effect. The underwater environment may make this difficult. If appropriate, the GM might require a character to make a PER Roll to determine if he can maintain LOS.

PERCEPTION POWERS

Some Powers require that a character be able to perceive the target before he can affect him. For example, a character can't Find Weakness on another character if he has no way to perceive him. Given that being underwater often interferes with perception (see *Perception And Communication,* above), the GM may want to require characters to succeed with a PER Roll with a Targeting Sense to use such powers. Making this roll takes no time.

CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Due to the breadth and flexibility of Change Environment, it can suffer many different effects from being underwater — it all depends on what the CE is built to do, and its special effects. The GM should adjust how the power manifests to let the character make reasonable use of it whenever possible. For example, creating an intense magnetic field might work with no problem, increasing the temperature might take time (but decreasing it take less time than normal, or work over a greater area), and instead of creating an area of mist and smoke the character might create turbulence. On the other hand, some effects (such as altering the weather or creating wind currents) might not work at all.

CLINGING

Some special effects of Clinging (such as cling-grip devices) tend to require dry and/or smooth surfaces — neither of which are common underwater — to function properly. If appropriate, the GM can reduce the STR of the Clinging, or forbid its use altogether.

INVISIBILITY

Invisibility to the Sight Group is much less effective underwater — the character is a human-shaped "hole" in the water that others can see. In game terms, Invisible to the Sight Group always has the Limitation *Bright Fringe* underwater if it doesn't have that Limitation already. Invisibility to other Sense Groups works normally, unless the GM rules otherwise.

MIND CONTROL

Unless the Mind Control has the *Telepathic* Advantage, communicating orders underwater may be difficult. See *Perception And Communication,* above, for more information.

Power Advantages

Most Advantages work normally underwater, but a few special cases exist.

NEW ADVANTAGE: POWER WORKS NORMALLY UNDERWATER (+¼)

In campaigns that involve frequent underwater adventuring, the GM might want to consider using this new Advantage. When a power has *Works Normally Underwater,* it works underwater just as well as it would if used in the air — it doesn't suffer any reduction in effect, automatically-imposed Limitations, or the like based upon either its special effect and/or the Power(s) and Power Modifier(s) used to create it. If the power functions better underwater, the character can choose to use the better effect... but if so, he must also accept any problems that the power normally suffers underwater.

Works Normally Underwater is most appropriate for Sensory Powers and the like, so that characters can freely communicate and perceive underwater. It's also appropriate for some Movement Powers. It's less appropriate for Attack and Defense Powers, but the GM may still wish to allow it. However, as with any other element of the *HERO System,* special effects are key: if a character can't provide a reasonable explanation for *why* his power works normally underwater, he shouldn't be allowed to buy the Advantage.

AREA OF EFFECT AND EXPLOSION

Actual physical explosions — grenades, bombs, sticks of dynamite, and so on — tend to be more effective underwater. For every 20 Active Points' worth of effect, add +1 DC to an explosion defined using Area Of Effect; for explosions defined using the *Explosion* Advantage, increase the drop-off rate by 1" for every 20 Active Points.

INVISIBLE POWER EFFECTS

Invisible Power Effects may be less effective — even useless — underwater when bought for Attack Powers to affect the Sight Group. Things that leave no visible trace in air still create turbulence or other effects in water. At worst, Invisible to Sight Group becomes useless; at best, the GM allows onlookers a Sight PER Roll to see the power. The GM determines how effective IPE is for other types of powers.

Power Limitations

Most Limitations work normally underwater, but a few special cases exist.

FOCUS

See *Technology, Gadgets, And Devices* above for general rules about using Foci underwater. In a game that stresses "realism," the GM may want to allow few devices to function properly beneath the surface; in a more "four-color" game, just about any super-device may work underwater.

GESTURES, INCANTATIONS, AND RESTRAINABLE

Water — particularly turbulent water — may interfere with a character's ability to make the proper Gestures or use a Restrainable ability. If appropriate, the GM may require the character to succeed with a STR Roll or DEX Roll each Phase to use the power.

Similarly, speaking Incantations may prove difficult or impossible (especially if a character's got a SCUBA mouthpiece in his mouth!). The GM may require a successful INT Roll to allow a character not born to the underwater environment to speak properly. If the character has the Language *Atlantean,* he can Incant underwater with no problem, because learning that language entails learning how to speak in the water.

RANGE BASED ON STRENGTH

See *Thrown And Propelled Attacks,* below, for information on how being underwater affects throwing things.

UNDERWATER FIGHTING

Some aspects of combat work differently when the fight takes place underwater.

BASIC UNDERWATER COMBAT RULES

Characters who fight underwater suffer from certain penalties unless they have the Talent *Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement:*

—the character is at -2 DCV

—the character suffers a -2 DC penalty on all attacks. If the rules earlier in this section state a different rule for reducing or increasing the damage for a particular type of attack, that specific rule overrides this general rule.

At the GM's option, a character who has an appropriate Skill, like PS: Diver, can reduce these penatlies to -1 each for a Phase if he succeeds with a roll (this takes no time). If a character has TF: SCUBA, he can ignore these penalties altogether for one Phase if he makes a DEX Roll.

Underwater OCV With Ranged Attacks

Characters normally suffer no OCV penalty just for being underwater. However, it's often difficult to perceive for long distances underwater, as discussed under *Perception And Communication,* above. In appropriate circumstances, the GM may require a character to succeed with a PER Roll to perceive the target he wants to attack (this takes no time). If the roll fails, the character suffers the standard non-perception penalty (see page 7). Alternately, the GM may simply impose a -1 OCV penalty per point by which the character missed his PER Roll.

Knockback

All Knockback Rolls made against targets who are underwater receive a +1d6 modifier to reflect the greater resistance of water.

THROWN AND PROPELLED ATTACKS

Many attacks involve throwing something, whether it's a weaponmaster throwing a boomerang, a martial artist flipping a foe to the ground, or a super-strong character throwing another character. Unfortunately, thrown attacks have very little effect underwater due to water resistance. All attacks involving throwing something (whether it's a weapon, a rock, the target of the attack, or what have you) automatically suffer from the *Reduced By Range* Limitation at double normal effect.

Furthermore, throwing works properly only when the character has a solid, stable surface to brace against, such as the ocean floor, an Atlantean road, or an underwater rock outcropping. If a character doesn't have something to "brace" against this way, then divide the distance of the throw between the character and whatever he throws — the thrown object/person goes half the distance forward, the character gets propelled half the distance backward.

Attacks propelled by some force other than a character's STR — such as an arrow shot from a bow, a spear fired from a speargun, or a bullet fired from a gun — fare a little better. They also automatically have the *Reduced By Range* Limitation, but only at regular effect. Nor is a solid, stable surface required to use them (though if a weapon has a particularly strong "recoil," the GM might rule that it spins the character around, requiring him to spend a Half Phase to right himself).

The standard rules about the aerodynamicity (or aquadynamicity, in this case) and balance of a thrown attack (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 35) apply to underwater thrown attacks; the GM may increase the penalty for particularly non-aquadynamic objects. These penalties also apply to propelled objects, though most such objects are both balanced and aquadynamic.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

In general, Combat and Martial Maneuvers work the same underwater as they do in the air, unless noted otherwise below. The GM may restrict maneuvers characters can use due to water resistance (*i.e.,* the fact that characters can't move as quickly as normal), lack of a stable surface to stand on in mid-water, and other factors. For example, kicks are often harder to perform, or impossible to use.

SPEARGUN

Divers who want to spearfish, or who'd like a little protection against marine predators, often carry a speargun. Spearguns use heavy-duty rubber bands or pneumatics to fire a small, sharp metal spear. Most have effective distances of about 9-18 feet.

RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½) (22 Active Points); OAF (-1), Limited Range (4"; -¼), 1 Recoverable Charge (-1¼). Total cost: 6 points.

BANGSTICK

This protective weapon consists of a stick with a shotgun shell fitted to one end. The user jabs it into a shark (or similar threatening fish) and triggers it, inflicting a severe wound.

RKA 2d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), 1 Charge (-2). Total cost: 7 points.

DIVE FOR COVER

Due to the difficulty of moving quickly through the water, the DEX Roll penalty for Diving For Cover is doubled, to -2 per 1" moved.

GRAB

Grab itself works normally, but the Throw that sometimes follows a Grab doesn't. If the character wants to "slam" a character to the ground in his hex or an adjacent hex, the Throw does its regular damage and has its other standard effects. If he wants to Throw the Grabbed victim further than that, the rules for Thrown attacks underwater apply (see above).

SWEEP

Due to water resistance and slowed movement underwater, Sweep may not be possible, particularly against multiple targets. If the GM allows it, he may want to increase the OCV penalty to -3 per attack after the first.

THROWS

Throws that have the special effect of tripping the target, dashing him to the ground, or the like (which is to say, most Martial Maneuvers with the *Throw* element) do only half damage. Throw maneuvers which knock the target down through impact or brute force do their full regular damage (though the GM may subtract a DC or two if he thinks that would be appropriate). If a character wants to Throw his target for distance (as described in *The Ultimate Martial Artist*), the rules for Thrown attacks underwater apply (see above).

WEAPONS

Many weapons work poorly (or not at all) underwater.

Melee Weapons

Moving most slashing, chopping, and smashing weapons (such as axes, maces, swords, flails, picks, and clubs) through the water is difficult — water resistance slows the attack down. In game terms:

—Small weapons like knives, daggers, and hatchets work normally, without an OCV penalty

—Other Short weapons (see the weapons tables in *Fantasy Hero, The Ultimate Martial Artist,* and similar books for weapon length rules) used to slash, chop, smash, or the like suffer a -1 OCV penalty

—Medium-length weapons used to slash, shop, smash, or the like suffer a -2 OCV penalty

—Long-length weapons used to slash, chop, smash, or the like suffer a -3 OCV penalty

The GM may increase or decrease any OCV penalty to better reflect the shape or nature of a particular weapon. He may also add a Damage Class penalty equal to the OCV penalty to reflect the reduction in force.

Thrusting and stabbing weapons — spears, tridents, and the like — suffer no OCV penalty at all. The GM may also eliminate the penalty for a slashing weapon if a character uses it to thrust (as he could with some swords).

Thrown And Propelled Weapons

See above for rules about throwing and propelling objects underwater.

Weapons made of wood, leather, and/or strings — such as most bows and crossbows — do not work for very long underwater, since they warp and stretch. For game purposes, assume 30 minutes of immersion renders such weapons useless (probably permanently). Bows and like weapons made from magical or high-tech materials may resist the effects of water longer, or all the time.

Firearms

For game purposes, assume that firearms will not work underwater, unless they use gyrojet ammunition or are specifically designed for underwater use (like the H&K P-11 pistol). Some firearms, particularly older types, won't even fire if they get wet. Just making a gun Watertight won't necessarily allow it to fire underwater, but does let a character carry it underwater without damaging it or rendering it incapable of firing when taken out of the water. See *Dark Champions* for more information about firearms.

GUNFIGHTING

In most *Dark Champions* campaigns, and some other types of games, the most common type of combat is the gunfight — a battle between two (or more) characters (or sides) using pistols, shotguns, assault rifles, and other types of firearms. Here are some special rules, options, and variants to help you more enjoyably simulate gunfire in *HERO System* terms.

Altering The Range Modifier

For most games, the standard Range Modifier works just fine. However, GMs looking for a particular "feel" for their games may want to consider changing it.

If you want a more "cinematic" atmosphere in your game, increase the Range Modifier to -2 per 5", 6", or more. The larger you make the number, the greater the chance characters can hit distant targets — in effect, you're giving every character a certain number of Range Skill Levels "for free." Extend the Range Modifier far enough, and your cinematic spies, soldiers, and vigilantes will be able to reliably shoot their enemies at 100 yards with handguns.

On the other hand, if you prefer a more "realistic" or "gritty" feel to your game, decrease the Range Modifier to 3" (any more than that is probably too restrictive, even for "high realism" games). That makes it much tougher to hit distant targets.

If you'd rather not change the measurement, you can achieve a similar result by altering the penalty itself. For a cinematic feel, switch to -1 OCV per 4"; for a more realistic game, try -3 OCV per 4". Or you could even combine the two, thus creating a Range Modifier of -1 per 3", -3 per 5", or the like.

Point Blank Shooting

At the GM's option, gunshots at very close ranges have an easier chance to hit their targets. If the target is within 2" (13 feet) of the shooter, the shooter receives a +1 OCV bonus.

Blowthrough

"Blowthrough" is a gun user's term for the ability of a bullet to penetrate some barriers or targets and keep traveling with relatively little loss of energy.

Blowthrough Versus Barriers

In some action films and novels, characters can shoot through a door, wall, table, or even roof to hurt a target on the other side. You can do this easily enough with the standard *HERO System* rules for damaging objects, but it's not as effective as in the movies, since the DEF and BODY of the intervening surface reduce the damage done by the attack.

To make this trick work, use this optional rule: if half of the damage caused by the firearm attack equals or exceeds the DEF+BODY of the barrier, the barrier does not reduce the damage the attack causes at all. If the attack has an Advantage that affects how it does damage to inanimate objects, such as *Armor Piercing,* it applies to determine if blowthrough occurs. If the attack doesn't do enough damage to cause blowthrough, the barrier reduces the attack's damage as usual.

Of course, whether blowthrough occurs or not, firing through a barrier often presents one drawback: since the character can't perceive his target with a Targeting Sense, he's at 0 OCV for attacking at Range (unless he can make a PER Roll with a Nontargeting Sense to reduce the penalty to half OCV). On the other hand, the target may not be expecting an attack, so the shooter could gain a Surprise bonus.

> **Example:** *Firefight knows his opponent is on the other side of a door. He cannot see his foe, but he makes a PER Roll with Hearing, and so attacks at half OCV; his foe is trying to be still and stealthy and does not see the attack coming, so he is at 0 DCV. Firefight's Attack Roll succeeds. His handgun does RKA 2d6 damage. The GM rules the door has 2 DEF, 2 BODY. Firefight rolls RKA 1d6 and gets 4 BODY — just enough for blowthrough! Firefight's target takes the full 4 BODY damage (though he still gets to apply his personal defenses, of course).*

If appropriate, the GM can also use the blowthrough rules even when characters aren't deliberately trying to shoot through a barrier. For example, if the PCs are trying to clear a building of terrorists, the knowledge that a stray shot might penetrate a wall and hit a friend or hostage on the other side may restrain their tendencies to shoot wildly.

Blowthrough Versus Characters

It's also possible to do blowthrough damage against living targets — sometimes a bullet penetrates the body, passes through, and exits out the other side with enough energy left to injure someone else. To determine this, compare the BODY damage rolled for the attack to the BODY + Resistant PD of the target. If the BODY damage is less than or equal to this number, then no blowthrough occurs. If it's greater, the GM rolls 1d6; on a 1-3, blowthrough occurs. When this happens, the bullet can still do ((BODY rolled) - (first target's BODY

+ rPD)) BODY damage to another target. If there's one in the shooter's line of fire (*i.e.,* directly behind the first target along the path the bullet's traveling), the shooter makes another Attack Roll using just his base OCV (*i.e.,* without any modifiers from Combat Maneuvers, the weapon used, or the like) against the second target's DCV. If that roll succeeds, the second target gets hit by the bullet and takes damage as described above.

Close Quarters Combat

It's not uncommon for some types of characters, such as gun-wielding vigilantes and cops, to find themselves in gunfights in cramped building interiors and the like — what's sometimes referred to as *close quarters combat.* In some cases, these gunfights take place at ranges not much further than hand-to-hand!

In a close quarters situation, characters using longer, larger, bulkier firearms may find themselves at a disadvantage. It's harder to move a weapon around and bring it to bear on the target when walls, furniture, fellow combatants, and other obstacles may get in the way. If the GM wants to simulate this (whether for the sake of "realism" or some other reason), he can use the following optional rules:

In close quarters combat, the longer a weapon is, the "slower" it is — the longer it takes the character to avoid any obstacles and aim at the target properly. Short weapons (*e.g.,* handguns) don't really have this problem, but using any firearm longer than a pistol imposes a penalty to the character's DEX solely for purposes of determining who acts first in a Segment. In other words, a character using a large gun in close quarters combat gets his Phase a little later in a Segment because he's got to move his gun around. The accompanying table lists the suggested DEX penalties for different types of firearms.

The GM can ignore or reduce the DEX penalty based on the circumstances. For example, if the character brings his gun to bear on a target, in later Segments he can keep firing at that same target without any penalty to initiative (provided the target doesn't move around).

CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT TABLE

Type Of Firearm	DEX Penalty*
Handgun	-0
Submachine gun	-1
Shotgun, short/sawed-off	-1
Shotgun, regular	-2
Assault rifle	-2
Rifle, regular	-2
Rifle, long/sniper	-3

*: This penalty applies only for purposes of determining when a character's Phase occurs. It does not affect his CV, his DEX Rolls, his Agility Skill rolls, or the like.

Grace Under Fire

In most action-adventure movies, comics, and novels, an action hero's ability to think and act clearly and efficiently in extremely dangerous situations (*e.g.,* a gunfight) is more or less taken for granted — after all, that's one of the things that makes a hero a hero. Thus, the gamers in most campaigns don't concern themselves with whether characters can get up the nerve to leap onto a moving car or stick their heads and arms out from behind cover to fire back at a numerically superior enemy.

But in more "realistic" games, GMs may want to introduce an element of uncertainty. Can a character *really* bring himself to jump onto that car? Does a character *really* dare to expose himself to enemy gunfire? Rather than leaving this matter up to roleplaying, you can use the optional *Grace Under Fire* rules to determine what characters can and cannot make themselves do in a dangerous situation.

In a campaign using the Grace Under Fire rules, whenever a character's going to do something the GM considers "very dangerous," the character must make a PRE Roll to perform the action. What constitutes a "very dangerous" action varies from campaign to campaign, based upon just how "realistic" the GM wants the game to be. But in most circumstances, anything that poses a risk of death or serious bodily harm should qualify.

If the character's PRE Roll succeeds, he can perform his declared Action, and he may even get a bonus if he rolled really well. If the roll failed, the character cannot act, and may suffer other problems. See the accompanying Grace Under Fire Table for specifics, including some suggested modifiers to the PRE Roll (GMs can add more modifiers if they wish, or allow an EGO Roll as a Complementary Skill Roll).

Recoil

Thanks to the physical law of action and reaction, guns, particularly ones fired on full automatic, have a tendency to recoil violently and to "ride up" — *i.e.,* jerk upward when fired, thus throwing off the shooter's aim for shots after the first. The *HERO System* rules don't specifically account for recoil when guns are fired. In "realistic" games, the GM may want to do so by adopting the following rules:

—For Autofire and Multifire (see below) against a single target, the attack suffers a recoil penalty of -1 OCV per shot fired after the first. For example, a five-shot Autofire burst would suffer a -4 OCV penalty; three Multifired shots would suffer a -2 OCV penalty. (If the GM feels this penalty is too harsh, he can reduce it to -1 OCV per two shots after the first, or use any other calculation that seems appropriate to him.)

—For Autofire against multiple targets, the standard -1 OCV per hex fired into accounts in part for recoil; no further penalty is imposed.

GRACE UNDER FIRE TABLE

PRE Roll	Result
Made it by 4+	Character may perform his declared Action, and gains a bonus of +2 to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls)
Made it by 2-3	Character may perform his declared Action, and gains a bonus of +1 to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls)
Made it 0-1	Character may perform his declared Action
Failed by 1	Character may perform his declared Action, but he suffers a penalty of -1 to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls)
Failed by 2-3	Character hesitates and loses a Half Phase. If it's still possible for him to perform his declared Action, he may do so, but he suffers a penalty of -2 (or more) to all rolls involved (including Attack Rolls). If he prefers, he may change to some other Action that he can perform in a Half Phase, provided that other Action is defensive or otherwise diminishes the danger or anxiety that caused him to hesitate.
Failed by 4+	The character is paralyzed with fear, hesitation, doubt, or the like. He loses a full Phase, may take no Actions, and is at half DCV. Alternately, he may panic, taking action that's detrimental to himself or his side in the fight (*e.g.,* accidentally shoot an ally, block the path of escape, knock something over and start a fire)
PRE Roll Modifier	**Circumstance**
+1 or more	Outcome of Action is crucial (will help save the city, or the like)
+1 or more	Action will help to save/protect character's loved ones from danger
+1 to +3	Action agrees with one of character's Psychological Limitations (+1 for Moderate, +2 for Strong, +3 for Total)
-1 to -3	Action contradicts one of character's Psychological Limitations (-1 for Moderate, -2 for Strong, -3 for Total)
-1 or more	Danger to character is extreme

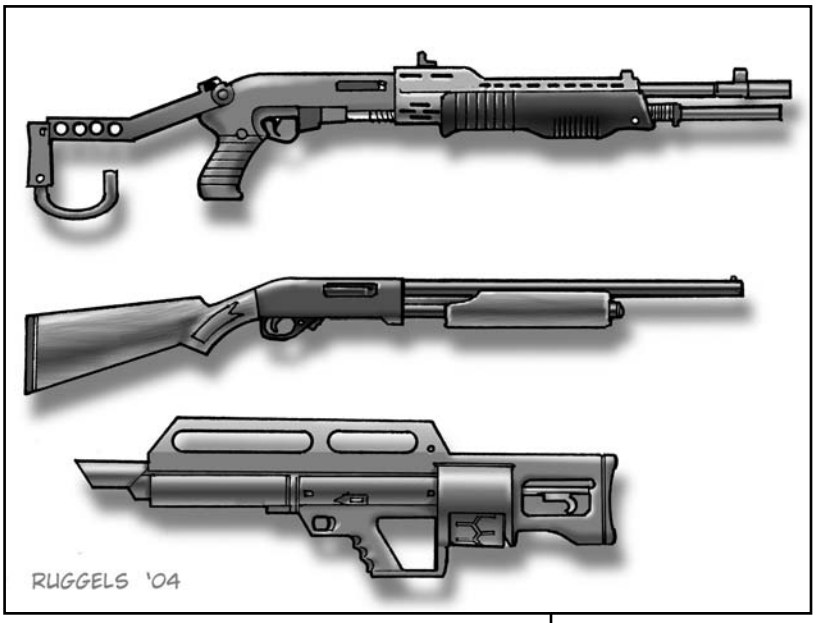
—For Rapid Fire against single or multiple targets, the standard -2 OCV penalty per shot after the first accounts in part for recoil; no further penalty is imposed.

Characters can attach *recoil compensators* to some guns to reduce the penalties imposed by recoil. These devices affect the recoil for Autofire, Multifire, or Rapid Fire against a single target, but have no effect on the OCV penalty for using Autofire or Rapid Fire against multiple targets. See *Dark Champions,* page 233 for more information.

Alternate Recoil Rules

For GMs who prefer not to impose straightforward OCV penalties for recoil, a possible alternative is to have the firing of multiple shots temporarily affect a firearm's STR Minimum. In effect, the gun becomes harder to "control" because the character can't take the time between shots to bring the gun properly back on target as he could if he were firing single shots. Using this rule, for each shot after the first, increase the gun's STR Minimum by 2. From that the GM can then determine if the character suffers an OCV penalty using the rules on page 478 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. Of course, this method only works if the character has to make a separate Attack Roll for each shot.

This rule applies to all three types of multiple firing, and regardless of the number of targets.



Reloading

The *HERO System* rules assume a character can reload a weapon with clips of Charges (whether the character pays for those Clips by modifying the *Charges* Limitation, or they're just standard magazines available to him as equipment in a Heroic campaign) as a Full Phase Action (or a Half Phase Action if he makes a Fast Draw roll). To keep things simple and speed game play, the rules don't differentiate between the type of ammunition or firearm involved. In a game emphasizing "realism," that may not be satisfactory. The accompanying box text lists the time required to reload different types

RELOADING TABLE

Type Of Firearm	Reloading Time	Reloading Time With Fast Draw
Automatic (belt-fed)	Full Phase	Half Phase
Automatic (magazine-fed)	Full Phase	Half Phase
Revolver (any type)	Extra Phase	Full Phase
Semi-Automatic (any type)	Full Phase	Half Phase
Shotgun (break-fed)	Extra Phase	Full Phase
Shotgun (pump-action)	Extra Phase	Full Phase
Shotgun (semi-automatic)	Full Phase	Half Phase

As indicated in the table, a character can halve the reloading time for any firearm by succeeding with a Fast Draw (Small Arms) roll.

of firearms.

Rapid Reloading Devices

Firearms manufacturers and users have created many different devices and techniques to make reloading faster. None of these cost any Character Points.

A *speedloader* is a device that allows a character to reload all the cylinders in a revolver at once (rather than one at a time, as usual). In game terms, this means reloading the revolver takes only a Full Phase (or a Half Phase with a successful Fast Draw roll).

Character using assault rifles, submachine guns, and other weapons with long clips can obtain devices that hold two clips together, end-to-end or side-by-side. These provide a +2 bonus to the Fast Draw roll to change clips more quickly. A low-tech way to simulate such devices is simply to tape two clips together end-to-end.

Slow Firearms

The *HERO System* rules assume that firing a gun — any type of gun — is an Attack Action, and takes the typical amount of time required for an Attack Action. However, not all firearms are fired in the same way. If the GM wants to stress "realism" more than dramatic action, some guns should take slightly longer to fire. For example:

—cocking a single-action handgun requires a Half Phase Action. Once it's cocked, firing it requires an Attack Action.

—pumping a pump-action shotgun to chamber a shell requires a Half Phase Action. Once the shell is chambered, firing the shotgun requires an Attack Action.

—preparing to fire a bolt-action rifle requires a Half Phase Action. Once a round's chambered, firing the rifle requires an Attack Action.

At the GM's option, a character can reduce any of these Half Phase Actions to a Zero-Phase Action if he succeeds with a Fast Draw roll.

Storm Of Lead

One of the things that makes many action-adventure movies so exciting is the fast-paced combat... which usually features an enormous amount of gunfire. By the end of some cinematic gunfights, the ground is litterly covered with spent bullet casings, the air is heavy with cordite-laced smoke, and nothing in the vicinity has been spared the brunt of flying lead — except, of course, for the intrepid hero.

If that's the sort of action you're looking for in your combats, here are some optional and expanded rules that can help you achieve it.

Reworked Rapid Fire

For the most part, the *Rapid Fire* Combat Maneuver is the best way to get lots of lead flying in your campaign. It lets characters fire a lot of shots, but maintains game balance by imposing some fairly heavy restrictions on the user. But if Rapid Fire isn't sufficient for your needs as-is, here are some ways you can change it to ratchet the gunplay up a notch or three. They're not exclusive; the GM can choose to allow several or all of them.

First, consider making Rapid Fire require only a Half Phase Action, like most other Attack Actions (*i.e.,* give everyone in the campaign the Skill *Rapid Attack* (Ranged) for free). That way characters can keep moving around the battlefield while they fire, which really adds to the cinematic feel of the gunfight.

Second, consider reducing the OCV modifier. -2 OCV per shot after the first can be a pretty steep penalty in some games, especially those where the GM establishes ceilings on CVs. A penalty of -1 per shot after the first, or -2 per shot after the first two, goes a long way toward persuading characters to let fly with lots of shots.

Third, consider reducing the DCV modifier. The halving of DCV is even more likely to make characters hesitate about using Rapid Fire than the OCV penalty. If you change it to a flat amount, such as -2 or -3 DCV, Rapid Fire becomes a much more attractive proposition.

Fourth, to speed game play, consider revising Rapid Fire against a single target so that it works something like Autofire: impose a flat OCV modifier (even -0, if you're so inclined), and then have the attacker make one Attack Roll. If he makes it exactly, he hits with one shot; for every two points beyond that by which his roll succeeds, he hits with another shot. If the GM uses this variant, he should consider capping Rapid Fire at three or four shots, so that characters still have a reason to buy Autofire weaponry.

If you incorporate any of these changes into your campaign, make sure to adjust other game elements as needed. For example, if you change the OCV penalty, you may want to refigure the cost of the *Two-Weapon Fighting* Skill.

Reworked Autofire

Another possible method for increasing the excitement of the gunfights in your game is to revise Autofire to encourage higher rates of fire and the like. The standard Autofire rules, like those for Rapid Fire, are designed in part to provide a certain level of game balance. If you're willing to tilt the playing field less in favor of "game balance" and more in favor of "cinematic action," Autofire can really improve the flavor of your game.

The following suggested rules changes apply only for the use of Autofire against a single target. When a character tries to Autofire multiple targets, the standard rules apply. (Characters who want to be better at shooting multiple targets should consider buying one or more Autofire Skills [*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised,* page 50].)

First, consider providing an OCV bonus for high rates of Autofire: the more shots a character

fires at a single target, the better his chance to hit. For a standard "burst fire" of 2-3 rounds, there's no bonus. For a 4-9 shot burst, the character receives a +1 OCV bonus; for a 10-14 shot burst a +2 OCV bonus; for a burst of 15 or more shots, he receives a +3 OCV bonus (the maximum). The GM can adjust the shots-fired-to-OCV-bonus ratio as he sees fit to strike just the right balance for his campaign. Of course, an Autofire firearm has to be capable of firing, for example, 10 shots per use to gain the +2 OCV bonus; this option doesn't give a gun automatic fire capabilities it hasn't paid for. (Alternately, the GM can provide a damage bonus for Autofire, similar to the one for Multifire described below.)

Second, consider changing the way you calculate Autofire hits to favor characters, thus encouraging them to take more shots. For example, instead of applying one hit if the Attack Roll succeeds exactly, and +1 hit for every 2 points beyond that by which the roll succeeds, maybe you allow +1 hit for every *1* point by which the roll succeeds. Or maybe you allow two hits for a basic success instead of one.

Multifire

Besides making Rapid Fire more attractive, another way to promote high rates of fire with non-Autofire weapons (particularly handguns) is *Multifire.* The GM may want to consider this a new Combat Maneuver for his games, or simply think of it as a combat option available to gun-wielding characters. Using Multifire requires a Full Phase, unless the character has the *Rapid Attack* (Ranged) Skill (in which case it requires a Half Phase Action) or the GM rules otherwise.

Multifire treats non-Autofire firearms as if they all had Boostable Charges: a character can fire multiple shots at a single target in a single round (up to five), and for each shot after the first, he increases the damage of the attack by +1 Damage Class if he hits. He only makes one Attack Roll, and he can only hit the target one time; the special effect of the extra damage is "he hit him multiple times, or scored one really good hit on a vital spot."

If the GM allows Multifire, he has to choose in what ways, if any, he wants to restrict or penalize its use to balance its utility. If he wants to model the "real world" closely, where two- and three-round bursts of pistol fire tend to be standard in many firefights, he may not want to impose any penalties, or at worst minor ones. If he's more interested in strict game balance, some penalties are definitely called for (though they can't be too onerous, or characters won't want to use Multifire much). Some possibilities include:

—always requiring a Full Phase Action to use Multifire

—imposing a small OCV penalty on Multifire (say, -1 or -2 OCV) to represent recoil and other factors (alternately, the GM may only apply a penalty at a certain level of Multifire, such as three or more shots)

—invoking the Burnout rule associated with Boostable Charges, so that too much Multifiring runs the risk of making a gun jam

Alternately, Multifire may not increase damage, but instead increase OCV. In that case, for every two shots a character fires (maximum of six) from a non-Autofire gun against a single target, the character gets a +1 OCV (maximum of +3). He only makes one Attack Roll, and he can only hit the target one time.

CINEMATIC GUNFIGHTING TRICKS

In a lot of action movies, characters can perform some pretty amazing stunts with guns. "Realistically," most of these actions are at the very least ridiculous, if not utterly counterproductive, but in some "cinematic" campaigns they may fit right in. Some of the Super-Skills on pages 106-49 of *Dark Champions* represent cinematic gunfighting abilities; here are a few that characters don't necessarily have to pay Character Points for.

PISTOL TRICKS

If a character makes a DEX Roll to "flick" his pistol in the direction of his target, his shots do +1 point of damage. After all, he's making the bullet travel faster, isn't he?

Another "pistol trick" is to hold the gun sideways while threatening someone, so that the grip is parallel to the ground instead of perpendicular. This has no combat effect, but gives the character +3 PRE for purposes of making Presence Attacks that Segment.

(In "realistic" games, flicking the pistol imposes -2 OCV penalty and has no beneficial effect. Holding a handgun sideways gives it a Jamming roll of 16-, but the character still gets the PRE bonus.)

SHOOTING FROM A REFLECTION

Sometimes a character has to aim at a target based not upon direct line of sight but on a reflection in a mirror, pool of water, or similar object. All such shots suffer a -3 OCV penalty... but if a character makes one, he may get a small bonus to any relevant Presence Attacks he makes that Segment against anyone who witnesses his skillful shooting.

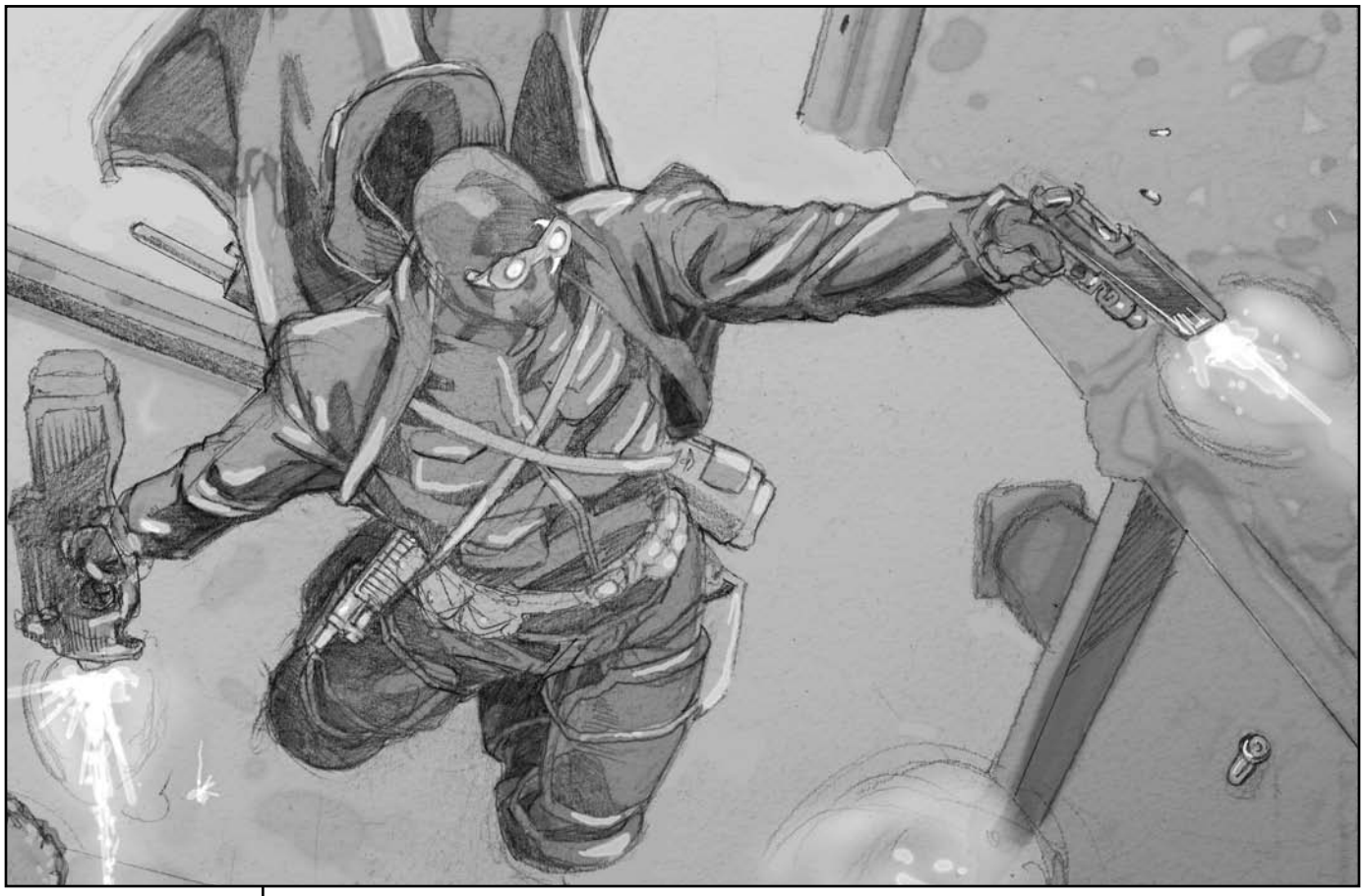
UNCONTROLLED MOVEMENT

In action movies, it's not uncommon for characters to fire guns (usually handguns) while in uncontrolled motion — during a fall, riding on a gurney, sliding down a bannister, or the like. At the GM's option, a character using uncontrolled movement during combat suffers a -1 OCV penalty, but a +1 DCV bonus. Furthermore, because he's not moving under his own power, uncontrolled movement allows him to keep moving without using a Half Phase Action.

A character can initiate uncontrolled movement in two ways. First, he can make a Half Move — for example, he could run for a Half Move and dive onto a gurney, which keeps rolling along without his having to use his remaining Half Phase Action to move. Even if the character doesn't actually move any inches in the process, he has to use

CAVEAT

The rules for increasing the effectiveness of gunfire increase the excitement of the game, but they can also make the battlefield a much more dangerous place for the PCs. The GM should keep this in mind when deciding whether to adopt them, and if so which ones to adopt. He may even want to arrange the campaign so that only the PCs and their major enemies can use the variant rules; standard enemies and thugs are stuck with the less favorable rules.



a "Half Move" (*i.e.,* a Half Phase Action) to begin uncontrolled movement. Second, he might start uncontrolled movement against his will — for example, when an enemy throws him onto a gurney or out a window.

In either case, how fast and far a character travels with uncontrolled movement is up to the GM (and possibly on the falling rules). It usually depends on the nature of his uncontrolled movement and how swiftly the character was moving when it started.

UNLIMITED AMMO

In a lot of movies and comic books, characters seem to have an almost infinite supply of ammunition. Despite the fact that they're using, say, a six-shot revolver, or a submachine gun with a 32-shot clip, they can fire as often, and as fast, as they want without ever reloading.

In game terms, if the GM wants to simulate this, he can simply rule that although all guns are bought with Charges, they never run out of Charges (except, of course, when he wants them to at a dramatically appropriate moment!). Characters can shoot as much as they want, but they only have to reload when they have the time and opportunity to do so.

Alternately, the GM can allow this only if characters pay for it. That means they either have to recalculate the cost of a favorite gun to have the *Reduced Endurance* (0 END) Advantage and no Charges, or they need some sort of ability that lets them apply Reduced Endurance to any firearm as a naked Advantage.

OTHER TRICKS AND STUNTS

Characters often want to try crazy stunts in combat to gain some sort of advantage. Since this adds color, drama, and excitement to a cinematic game, the GM should normally allow it — but he may also want to impose an OCV penalty so the PCs don't get the advantage of the maneuver without working for it. The easiest way to do this is to analogize the stunt to an existing Combat Maneuver or Modifier and base the penalty on that.

Example: *Randall is fighting some mafiosi in a swank restaurant with lots of chandeliers. He wants to shoot the support beam so the chandeliers will fall and injure three of his enemies (who each happen to be standing beneath a chandelier). Since this stunt is a way for Randall to hit multiple opponents in one Phase, just like Rapid Fire, the GM imposes a -2 OCV penalty per target after the first (total of -4), similar to the penalty for Rapid Fire. This reflects not the difficulty of hitting the support beam so much as it does the difficulty of timing the shot so the chandeliers hit their intended targets.*

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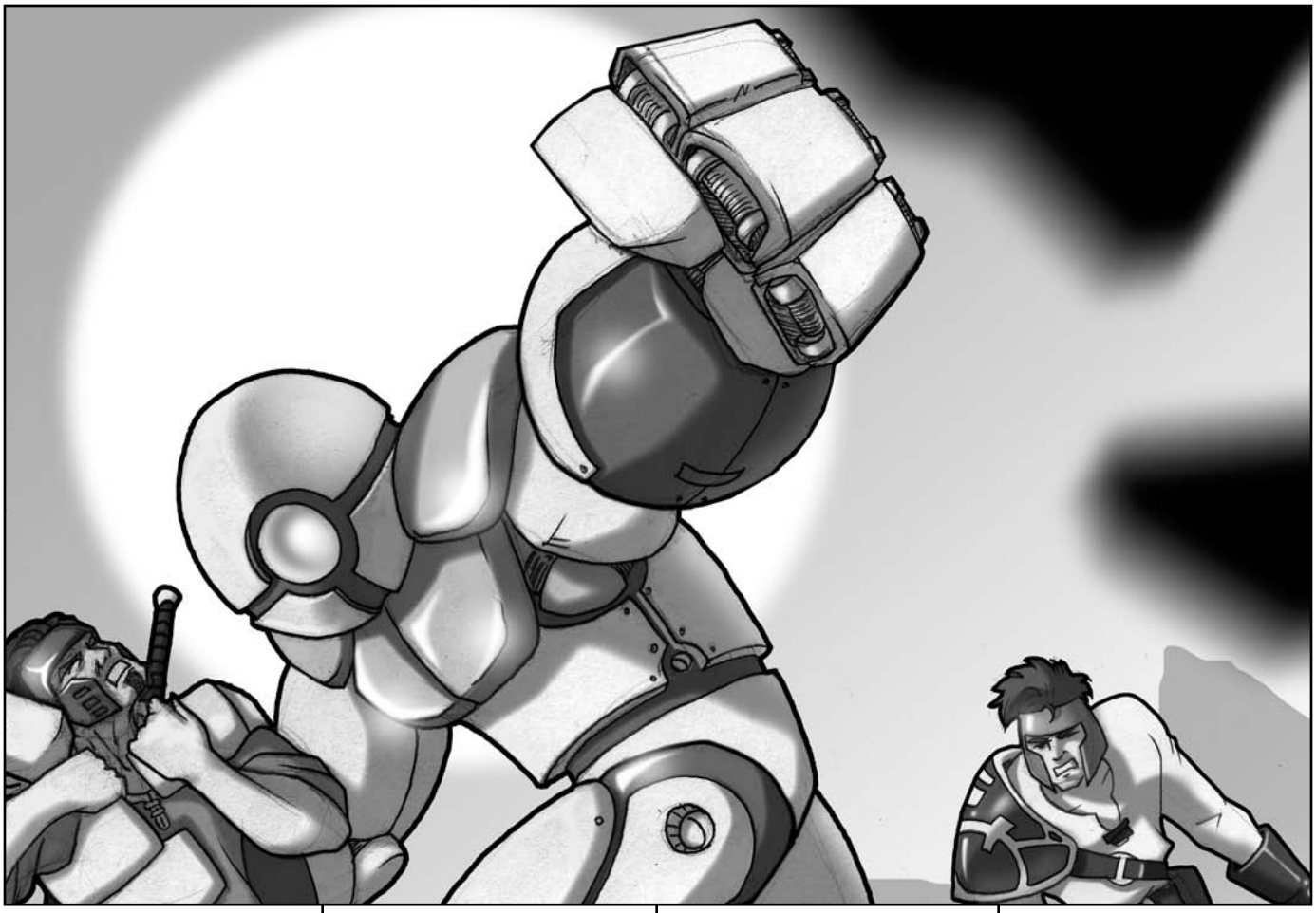

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THE GLORY OF BATTLE

The **HERO System** rules are designed to handle any type of combat — whether it involves two groups of gun-wielding gangsters on a grimy inner city street, caped superheroes using energy bolts and super-strength in a fight in outer space, Fantasy warriors and wizards wielding swords and spells against trolls and dragons, a blaster duel in the corridors of a starship, or even stranger forms of conflict. The basic rules in Chapter Two of the **HERO System 5th Edition, Revised** rulebook, combined with the more advanced or genre-specific rules in various **HERO System** books, allow you to fight just about any type of battle you can imagine.

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