

MH CHARACTER CREATION GUIDELINES 1.0

| Base Points | Max Disad Points | Max From One Disad | Total | Char | SPD | CV | Skill Roll | Normal DEF |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|-------|--------|----------|------|------------|------------|
| 125 | 75 | 25 | 200 | 13-17* | 02/04/09 | 5-11 | 12-** | 18 |

* - One or two characteristics may (and probably should) be 18-25.

** - One or two skills should be in the 15+ range.

Point Limit

Players are given 125 Character Points + 75 Disadvantage Points to build their characters. In addition we'll be using the Resource Points rules from **Dark Champions (pg. 150)**: each character will receive 20 Equipment Points, 10 Vehicle/Base Points and 10 Contact/Follower Points. These points are above and beyond the base 200 pts each character has and follow all the rules listed in Dark Champions. However, unlike the normal Resource Points rules, the points in the Equipment Pool can only be used for mundane non-combat equipment. If it's not available to your character's resource rating (**Dark Champions pg 153**), qualifies as "super" tech or it's primarily used as a weapon or armor, then you must pay Character Points for it.

Shticks

Each character should have a primary shtick (in other words, your job on the team) with one or two secondary shticks. Some examples of shticks would be:

- Techie
- Medic
- Investigator
- Espionage
- Mystic
- Well-Connected

I'm sure we can all think of others, but the above list is probably the minimum list of slots we'll need to fill for a well-rounded team.

Secondary shticks should overlap with other characters' primary shticks. In this way, if we're down a player or two, we'll still have all our bases covered without having one character monopolizing multiple roles within the group.

Characteristics

Normal Characteristic Maxima is the default for this campaign. As such, no Character Points will be received for it. Most Primary Characteristics should fall in the 13-17 range, with some characters reaching the 18+ territory in one or two stats.

In order to preserve flavor and individualized roles, no two characters should have the same 2 Primary stats of 18+. Thus, if Mark's character has 20 STR and 18 CON, everyone else should avoid having **both** STR and CON above 17. This limitation only applies to initial character creation. How far you raise your stats via EPs is mainly a matter of what you're willing to pay for (though see below under *Character Improvement*).

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Skills

A character's primary skills (those that fit the character's shtick best) should fall in the 12-13 range with one or two in the 15+ range. Higher is possible but should be exceptionally rare. In addition, we'll be using the rules for the Expert skill modifier (**Dark Champions 84**) and Super Skills (**DC 106**). However, with super skills some limitations may apply. Speak to the GM about any super skills you wish your character to have before hand.

Familiarities: A 1 point Familiarity in a skill grants a skill roll of (**Characteristic Roll - 3**) or **8-**, whichever is better.

Background/General Skills: A 2 point general skill has a skill roll of (**Characteristic Roll - 1**) or **11-**, whichever is better.

All other skills: All other skills are treated as normal.

The only skills that need to be broken down into their sub-categories are those where such is required in the core rulebook (5ER), such as Survival. However, you may choose to break down other skills (such as Computer Programming). If you do so, the sub-categories will be treated as supporting knowledge skills (allowing for easier rolls or complimentary rolls) to the main skill.

Everyhero Abilities

Every character has the following list of Skills & Abilities at no cost:

- Acting 8-
- Climbing 8-
- Concealment 8-
- Conversation 8-
- Deduction 8-
- Language: Native (literate, fluent)
- Paramedics 8-
- Persuasion 8-
- One PS at 11-
- Shadowing 8-
- Stealth 8-
- TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles
- AK: Home country or region 8-
- Luck 1d6

Lightning Reflexes

Lightning Reflexes stacks with DEX for the purposes of calculating Normal Characteristic Maxima. Therefore, if your character has a 15 DEX and purchases 6 levels of Lightning Reflexes with Pistols, the final cost for the Lightning Reflexes will be $5 * 1.5/\text{Level} = 7$ pts for the first 5 levels (DEX + LR = 20) plus $1 * 1.5 * 2 = 3$ pts for the final level (to DEX + LR = 21).

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Luck

No character can start the game with more than 3 dice of Luck unless it is a major part of their shtick. More than 3 dice of Luck counts as a Supernatural Power.

Supernatural Powers

Super Powers do exist in this campaign, however they are neither as ubiquitous nor as effective as they are in a normal Champions campaign. Usually they will be of vary narrow focus, be relatively low-powered or have serious drawbacks. Take telepathy for example: If you can just get a general sense of the emotional state of those you're talking with, such a power would be fairly reliable and work on most people. If you're actually able to read surface thoughts, you'll probably have to concentrate and be in close proximity. Probing memories would require intense concentration and physical contact. Reading the subconscious should be highly unreliable and difficult.

On the equipment front, the majority of the world is still at a tech level equal to the real world. Some organizations have access to beyond normal tech, but such is extremely rare and not well understood. As a result, the PCs will generally only be using normal equipment unless it's part of their shtick to have access to high-tech items. Even then, just as with powers, the more powerful and out of the ordinary your tech is, the less reliable and flexible it should be. At the vary least, you'll have all the problems associated with working with the only existing prototypes.

In addition, it is a common convention in the Monster Hunting genre that supernatural power always comes at a price. For every Character Point spent on Powers, an equal number of points must be spent on related Disadvantages. For example, if you build a character with 50 points worth of magical spells, at least 50 points of your Disadvantages must relate to being a spellcaster or magic in general. If you build a cybernetic character with 40 points worth of cybernetic powers, then your character should have 40 points worth of Disadvantages related to being a cyborg. This requirement does not apply to powers used to represent "super-skills" (see Dark Champs pg 106), talents or real-world equipment. This should only apply to powers of some form of supernatural/high-tech/psychic/etc origin.

Another thing to consider is mobility. In general, characters should be capable of roughly 25-30" per turn of full combat movement (somewhere in the 7-10" move range at Speed 3). However, things like full Flight and Teleportation are rather rare in the genre and should be heavily Limited and weak. Similarly, true speedsters tend to be very rare. Even the fastest characters tend to be limited to speeds of around 40-60 mph rather than breaking the sound barrier when running flat-out. Their in-combat speeds tend to be close to the normal range (at best half-again as fast as the average PC).

When making power selections keep in mind that one of the main components of Monster-Hunting adventures is mystery. Please avoid mystery-breaking powers (like high levels of Telepathy or Mind Control) or overly potent senses (like N-Ray Vision or the ability to track an inch-worm through a snowstorm via scent). Origins for powers are wide open. However, mystic & psychic powers tend to be the most common with high-tech equipment and advanced training coming in a close second. Mutant powers and aliens tend to be the least common, though certainly not unheard of.

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Disadvantages

Dark Champions has several Psychological Limitations appropriate to this genre. Many fit perfectly to the atmosphere. However, some are a bit too dark for the tone we're trying to create. Because of that, the following Psychological Lims should be avoided: 'Casual Killer', 'Loner', 'Trigger-happy' and 'Vigilante Mentality'. The other Psychological Limitations listed in *Dark Champions* work perfectly fine, though it's also recommended you stay away from 'Hatred of Killing Attacks' and the full 20pt. Version of 'Code vs. Killing'.

Also, see above under Supernatural Powers in regards to how Disadvantages should balance with super powers.

Combat Balance

A primary staple of the 'Street-Level' genre is that bullets are still a threat to the heroes. This means that there has to be a hard cap set on Resistant Defenses. Being bullet resistant is fine. Being bullet proof is too much. So, Resistant Defenses can't be much more effective than Heavy Kevlar, which gives us an upper limit of 11 Resistant Defense. For an average, however, 9 Resistant Defense would be expected. That makes the character pretty resilient against most handguns, but will still consider rifles & high caliber weapons to be a serious threat.

Normal Defense also needs to be looked at. Here we don't need to set so much of a hard cap but an average should be figured in. Fights in this genre tend to be short and decisive and having too much resistance to Stun damage runs counter to that feel. Therefore, the average Normal Defense (including Resistant Defenses) should be around 18.

Since we're talking about defense, now is a good time to cover DCV. The average cultist with a handgun starts with a base 3 OCV and several automatic pistols have a +1 OCV. That makes the average cultist an effective 4 OCV. It should be pretty hard for said cultist to get a hit the average PC. Setting a DCV average of 8 means that any given cultist only has about a 16% chance of hitting at point blank range. Cultists in a group all firing at once become dangerous, but a single PC should be in pretty good shape against 3 or 4 so long as he maintains his mobility.

Offensively, we should be balancing fairly well against our typical defenses. OCV is the easiest to balance by calling for an average 8 OCV. This is the average for your most commonly used attack. If that attack involves a gun, remember to factor in the gun's OCV bonus. Since we've established that the average PC should be considerably more effective than the typical thug, they should be somewhat faster giving us an average PC Speed of 3. Doing some quick calculating, I averaged the Damage Classes of all the small arms in the Hero System 5ER rulebook and it comes out to 9. So that seems a fair choice for where Attack Powers should sit on average.

Now, that leaves us to figure out STUN, REC, BODY and CON as far as general combat effectiveness goes. One of the established genre conventions is for short and decisive fights. This gives us something to work with for figuring out where our STUN & REC should sit. An average 30 STUN and 6 REC will end most fights at around Turn 2, Segment 3 (or 5 attacks at Speed 3). Since Dark Champions combats are relatively bloody, a BODY of 13-17 is strongly recommended. Since being Stunned isn't much fun, but should still be a viable threat, we'll want enough CON to keep it from happening too often. A CON of 15 means that you only have a 23% chance of being Stunned by any given attack by Average Hero.

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So, for Average Hero in this campaign, we're looking at combat stats of:

| | | | | | |
|------|-----|------|-----|------|------|
| SPD | OCV | DC | DCV | nDEF | rDEF |
| 3 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 18 | 9 |
| | | | | | |
| STUN | REC | BODY | CON | | |
| 30 | 6 | 15 | 15 | | |

To assist with calculating where your character should fall in relation to Average Hero, I've created Java application named HeroBalancer. You should be able to run this app if you've got Java 1.5 or later installed on your computer. I've tested this on Windows and Linux (sorry, no Mac to test on). You can download the application [here](#). Just unzip HeroBalancer.zip into its own folder. If you're running Windows, you can just double-click RunHeroBalancer.bat. I haven't put together a Linux or Mac script file, but the command to run it should be basically the same as what's in the .bat file. If you've got Java properly configured, you should be able to just double-click on the HeroBalancerGUI.jar file to run it. Also in the zip file are 5 character files:

- Average_Hero_kovb.xml - This is the above Average Hero character to balance your characters against. Your character should get KOed at about the same time as Average Hero does.
- Average_Person_Pistol.xml, Competent_Norm_Pistol.xml, Notworthy_Person_Pistol.xml and Skilled_Norm_Pistol.xml are various character write-ups from pgs 345-346 of 5ER, each armed with a simple pistol. You can use these go get an idea of how your character should stack up against various levels of "thug".

Eventually these averages will go up for the campaign. However, if players are investing solely in improving their combat capabilities, we'll quickly loose the feel of the genre. So, it's better to work toward increasing your character's flexibility rather than pure combat effectiveness. Ideally, my goal would be for the average to increase by +1 OCV & +1 DC about every 30-40 experience points with matching increases in defenses. At about 3-4 EPs per session, that works out to roughly 6 months of real time. There is one exception to this increase: The limit of 11 rDEF will always remain.

Character Improvement

Improvements to combat ability were discussed above under *Combat Balance*. In this section, we're discussing more generalized improvements to PCs through the expenditure of EPs. Training takes time and often access to an instructor. In general a given ability should not go up by more than 2 or 3 Active Points at a time. After all, it's unrealistic for a character's Strength to suddenly double (+5 STR) in the course of just a week or two. Exceptions may be made from time to time, depending upon the expenditure in question, but realize that any increases over 2 to 3 Active Points will be heavily scrutinized and will need solid in-game justifications and may have additional in-game requirements to implement.

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