

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS™ ROLEPLAYING GAME

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

UPDATED: 03/01/03

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Be sure to download the most recent version of the *Mutants & Masterminds Errata*, available from the Green Ronin website (www.greenronin.com), which corrects errors in the book and may answer many questions. Corrections in the errata are not covered in this FAQ for the most part, although the FAQ does take the errata and corrections into account.

Can I use the *Mutants & Masterminds* rules with a genre or setting other than superheroes?

Sure, if you want to. By setting the starting power level and limiting what attributes (skills, feats, and powers) are available, you can use *Mutants & Masterminds* to play in other settings or genres. For some genres you may want to tweak the rules to make them more realistic or less "comic book" in style. See Chapter Nine of the core rulebook for guidelines to help you change the rules to suit your style of play.

How compatible is *Mutants & Masterminds* with other d20 RPGs?

M&M uses the core of the d20 game system, namely a d20 roll, plus modifiers, versus a Difficulty Class (DC). It does not use many elements of the d20 System, including classes, hit points, experience points, attacks of opportunity, or any dice other than one 20-sided die. The game stats are similar to other d20 games, and will be familiar to players who know them, but they're not 100% compatible. You can import material from other games with a little conversion work, adjusting the stats as needed to conform to the *Mutants & Masterminds* system.

HERO ARCHETYPES

Some of the hero archetypes don't add up right.

See the *Revised Hero Archetypes* file, available from the Green Ronin website, for updated and corrected game stats for the hero archetypes. Secondary printings of the M&M core rulebook contain these revised archetypes.

ABILITY SCORES

How do I assign a character a non-existent ability score?

Generally, you don't. Non-existent ability scores are primarily for modeling things like constructs and there are particular rules dealing with them on pp. 117–118. The GM *may* allow players to assign a character a non-existent ability score as a weakness (p. 106), keeping in mind that non-existent scores can severely hamper characters. Non-existent Strength means the character cannot manipulate the physical world at all. (Keep in mind that even a permanently incorporeal character can still use Str to affect incorporeal things.) Non-existent Dexterity means the character is utterly incapable of physical movement. Characters with non-existent Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma are not recommended, since they lack the free will and awareness to be player characters. Non-existent Constitution is effectively an advantage, since it makes a character immune to many physical concerns and environmental hazards. Characters with no Constitution scores aren't true living beings and should be built as intelligent constructs (p. 118).

SKILLS

Why are skills so expensive?

This is based on the way skills are often handled in the comics. Generally speaking, comic book characters have either very few skills or they are extraordinarily capable in a wide range of them. If you want your character to be good at a particular type of skill, such as athletics or scientific pursuits, you're best off buying the appropriate Super-Ability for those skills. For example, a character focusing on skills like Acrobatics, Balance, Hide, and Move Silently benefits from having ranks in Super-Dexterity, which improve all of those skill checks. Likewise, a character who is a brilliant scientist benefits from having ranks in Super-Intelligence. This doesn't necessarily mean that the character is "super-powered." You can define the Super-Ability as the result of intensive training or talent (see *Power Source*, pp. 56–57). This allows you to lower the number of power points the character has to invest in skills.

Alternately, if you prefer to have a more skill-intensive game, you can simply lower the cost of skill ranks. Three skill ranks per power point seems to work well for many groups.

FEATS

If I have the Attack Finesse feat, can I add my Super-Dexterity bonus to my melee attack rolls?

No. Super-Dexterity does not provide an attack bonus.

It says that the Rapid Healing feat stacks with Regeneration. How does this work?

Basically, you combine the effects of the two: Rapid Healing allows the character to regain an additional stun and lethal hit when the character recovers. Regeneration allows the character to recover its rank in stun and lethal hits per minute. So a character with both recovers his Regeneration rank, plus one, in stun and lethal hits per minute. Rapid Healing does *not* double the rate of Regeneration.

Do Sidekicks take damage as minions?

No. Sidekicks suffer damage like regular characters. Note that Sidekicks do not have Hero Points of their own, but players can spend Hero Points on behalf of their characters' Sidekicks.

Can I import feats from other games?

Yes, if you want, although some feats may have game mechanics or prerequisites not found in *Mutants & Masterminds* such as feats that involve attacks of opportunity or particular class abilities. Some feats may need to be modified to work in *Mutants & Masterminds*, and you should always carefully consider a feat's effects before allowing it into your game. See the guidelines on creating new feats on p. 53 for some general ideas.

SUPER-POWERS

How does power stacking work?

Basically, powers that affect the same attribute or die roll "stack," that is, add their bonuses together. The limitation on this stacking is that the total bonus from powers to any one attribute or die roll cannot exceed the character's power level.

For example, Amazing Save (Damage), Super-Constitution, Protection, and Force Field all provide a bonus to Damage saves. Amazing Save and Super-Con add a bonus to the Damage save roll, while Protection and Force Field reduce the DC of the save (by reducing the attack's damage bonus). These benefits all stack. A character cannot, however, have a total bonus (increase in Damage save or reduction of DC) greater than his power level.

Does the power level limit apply to all bonuses or only powers?

Only powers. Bonuses from ability scores, skills, and feats aren't affected by the stacking limit except where it specifically says otherwise.

Do extras and power stunts that duplicate other powers work at the same rank as the base power?

Yes, unless stated otherwise, extras and power stunts that duplicate another power work at the rank of the base power.

Can I "borrow" extras, power stunts, and flaws from other powers?

If it suits your character concept and the GM allows, yes. Keep in mind, however, that some extras, power stunts, and flaws associated with specific powers are designed for those powers and may or may not be suitable for other powers.

Can I make up new extras and power stunts?

Sure, check out the power creation guidelines on pp. 92–99 of the core rulebook and the **Power Creation** section of this FAQ. You should always check with your Gamemaster before creating a new extra or power stunt for your character, and GMs have the final approval of any new extras or stunts in their campaigns.

How are the stored points from Absorption used?

It works like this: Rebound has Absorption (physical) +10 with the ability to channel his absorbed energy into an Energy Blast (kinetic). He's punched for +8 damage. His power absorbs it all, giving him 8 points of "stored" energy. Rebound can now channel those 8 points into an Energy Blast +8 on his next action, if he wishes. Before he goes, Rebound is struck with another physical attack for +12 damage. Ouch! His Absorption reduces the damage bonus to +2 ($12 - 10 = 2$). Rebound's stored energy goes up to 18 ($8 + 10$) and he makes a normal Damage save against the remaining +2 damage bonus.

On his action, Rebound channels his stored energy into a powerful kinetic Energy Blast. Although he has 18 stored points, his Energy Blast can't be more powerful than +10 (his power rank). So he goes with the most powerful blast that he can, leaving him with 8 stored points, enough for a +8 Energy Blast on his next turn (unless he absorbs more energy before then).

Does Absorption still reduce damage after you've reached your maximum storage capacity?

Yes, the character simply doesn't add any more points to his storage capacity. Such extra energy harmlessly "bleeds off."

Do you need to buy the Ghost Touch extra to use the attack powers associated with incorporeal Alternate Forms (such as Suffocate in gaseous form)?

No. It's included in the cost of Alternate Form.

Doesn't Blending seem a little expensive when compared to Invisibility?

Well, Invisibility is more effective, as you'd expect, however Blending does have a few minor advantages: it's Continuous, so it doesn't require concentration and it doesn't go away when you're stunned or incapable of free actions. It's unaffected by See Invisibility (which totally negates Invisibility) and you can Hide from things like blindsight (which also negates Invisibility). At close range, the chance of detecting an invisible or blended character are basically the same on a Spot check (assuming the same power rank).

How does Duplication work when creating multiple duplicates?

Normally, characters with Duplication can create a single duplicate as a half action. The duplicate can have ranks and bonuses equal to the original's or the character's Duplication power rank, whichever is *less*. The character can continue creating duplicates, one per half action, up to a maximum number equal to his Duplication power rank.

To create more duplicates rapidly, the character can accept a penalty to his power rank. This lowers the maximum bonuses and ranks of the duplicates but allows the character to create one additional duplicate per half action per -1 rank penalty. This does not affect the character's maximum number of duplicates.

So, for example, if Myriad has Duplication +10, she can create a single duplicate (with up to +10 ranks and bonuses) as a half action. She can create a total of 10 duplicates (requiring 10 half actions or 5 rounds, if she does nothing else). If she chooses to lower her power rank to +6, she can create an additional 4 duplicates with one half action, plus the base one duplicate, for a total of 5 duplicates in one half action. She can reach her limit of 10 duplicates in one round if she does nothing else.

Incorporeal seems really powerful. For 3 power points per rank you can take it with Ghost Touch and be essentially untouchable.

You're pretty much immune to physical attacks, yes, but there has to be one type of attack that affects you normally (and it's up to the GM how common that attack has to be). You're also still affected by environmental conditions unless you have the Immunity extra, so you can suffocate, be affected by gases, intense heat and cold, etc. Various powers still affect you, like Dazzle, Fatigue, Force Field, Illusion, Mental Blast, Mind Control, Neutralize, Paralysis, Slow, Snare (if it has the appropriate special effect), Stun, and Suffocate. Some effects are up to the GM, depending on the special effects of Incorporeal and the other power. Plus attacks with Ghost Touch or the Mental extra, of course. And, if your Incorporeal power isn't Continuous, then all somebody has to do is stun you and you're pretty much defenseless. Powerful? Yes. Insurmountable? Not really.

How does Neutralize work against devices?

It works just fine, actually. When a device is targeted with Neutralize, it uses its power rank as its saving throw bonus. If a device is particularly bound to its user in some way (in the GM's opinion) it can use its power rank or the owner's Will save, whichever is greater.

Protection stops *all* damage less than its power rank? Isn't that too powerful?

Protection does provide a substantial amount of, well, protection, but that's its job. It's worth noting that Protection must reduce an attack's damage bonus *below* 0 to negate it, so an attack with a damage bonus equal to the target's Protection bonus can still have some effect. There are also a number of powers that don't have a damage bonus, and are therefore not affected by Protection, such as Dazzle, Drain, Fatigue, Illusion, Mental Blast, Mind Control, Paralysis, Slick, Slow, Snare, Stun, and Suffocate.

If you find Protection too powerful or effective in your campaign, you can modify it so that it only allows characters to ignore attacks reduced to a damage bonus of less than -5, rather than 0. This means attacks with a damage bonus of 5 less than the target's Protection bonus still have a small chance of affecting the target.

How much does Snare limit a target's actions?

This is covered in the power's description on p. 82, but may require some interpretation from the GM. One successful use of Snare means the target is *entangled*: -2 on attack rolls and -4 to Dexterity (with a commensurate -2 penalty to Defense). If the snare is anchored to an immobile object (such as the ground), the target also cannot move. The target is still capable of taking physical action within the limits above: attacking, using powers, etc. An exception is the Sorcery power, which is restricted when a character is entangled, since he cannot "gesture freely" as the power requires.

A second successful use of Snare renders a target bound and helpless. The target cannot move or take other physical actions. He loses his dodge bonus to Defense and his Dexterity is treated as 0, applying an additional -5 to Defense. Attackers additionally gain a +4 bonus to hit the target. The target is still conscious and capable of mental actions, including using powers, at the GM's discretion.

Additional uses of Snare after the second may, at the GM's discretion, increase the snare's hardness by +1, up to one and a half times the original hardness (which is equal to the power's rank). Thus a character can "layer" a snare over a target to reinforce it.

Can you turn extras on and off?

Yes. "The use of extras is optional. That is, if your hero has an extra for a power, she can choose whether or not to use it. So a hero who has Energy Blast with the Area extra can fire a normal blast or choose to fire an area blast. You also can use your extras in any combination that you wish, except where specifically prohibited by their descriptions. The GM may ban some power/extra combinations in the game, when necessary" (p. 96).

Can you vary the area of an area-effect power?

Yes. A character can choose the area of a power that affects an area when the power is used and can vary the area of an ongoing area-effect power as a free action. The minimum area is a single five-foot square, while the maximum area is determined by the power's rank as given in the power description. An area-effect power with the Full Effect flaw (p. 97) cannot be varied; it must always be used to cover the maximum area.

POWER CREATION

How do I create new powers?

The guidelines for power creation are given on p. 92–99 of the *Mutants & Masterminds* core rulebook. The basic process of creating a power involves deciding what effects the power has, what (if any) modifications to the standard effects are required (via extras and flaws), what limitations the power has (via flaws) and adding up the power's cost.

I found a power that doesn't work exactly according to the power creation rules. Why?

Although all the powers in *Mutants & Masterminds* were created using the power creation guidelines given on pp. 92–99, some have been slightly modified or "tweaked" in various ways, either for game balance or style reasons, to give the powers the right look, feel, and game effect. We encourage players and Gamemasters to do the same with their own homemade powers and additions to the game. Power creation and design is an art as well as a science and we wanted *Mutants &*

Masterminds to reflect that. Change things as you see fit to suit the style of your campaign and of your gaming group.

CHARACTERISTICS

The example of travel on p. 104 seems to be calculated wrong. Shouldn't Marathon's multiplier be $\times 1,024$ instead of $\times 4,096$?

No, because sprinting applies a $\times 4$ multiplier to base speed to begin with.

Can you spend Hero Points to re-roll Damage saving throws?

Yes. You can spend Hero Points (and Villain Points!) to re-roll Damage saves, just like any other die roll.

If you spend a Hero Point to overcome the fatigue of extra effort, do you suffer the fatigue on the next round or is it eliminated entirely?

It's eliminated entirely. In essence, you don't suffer the fatigue *at all* for that particular use of extra effort.

DEVICES

How are the costs of vehicles figured?

A vehicle's cost is the total of its movement ranks, its armor bonus, and any other features it may have (such as weapons). Vehicles have hardness equal to their highest rank for free. Any hardness in excess of this increases the vehicle's cost on a 1-for-1 basis (+1 cost per point of hardness).

So a bicycle has movement 5 (5 pp) and hardness 5 (0 pp, since it's equal to the vehicle's highest rank) for a total cost of 5 pp. A train has movement 7 (7 pp), armor 8 (8 pp), and hardness 13 (which is 5 more than the train's highest rank, so it costs an additional 5 pp) for a total cost of 20 pp.

How do you determine the Defense of a vehicle?

Vehicle Defense = 10 + size modifier + speed modifier + maneuver modifiers (if any) + driver's Dex modifier as a dodge bonus.

Can a character use extra effort in conjunction with a device?

That depends on the nature of the device and the decision of the Gamemaster. Certainly devices powered or influenced by the wielder's will/energy/thoughts/etc. can use extra effort, and GMs may permit characters to "push" super-science devices through extra effort. The GM may rule that some devices, like guns, either can't use extra effort, or that the wielder must spend a Hero Point to eliminate the fatigue of the extra effort in order to apply it to that device. This limitation is not an additional flaw; it's a facet of the Device flaw.

COMBAT

What's the difference between Defense and Damage save?

Defense is how difficult a character is to hit, the base DC of an attack roll. Damage save is a character's ability to "soak" or shrug off damage. Protection reduces the DC for Damage saves.

Why is the Difficulty Class for Damage saving throws so high?

The idea behind Damage save DCs is that, all other things being equal, there is a 25% chance of no damage, a 25% chance of a hit, a 25% chance of a stun result, and a 25% chance of a knockout or disabled result. If you prefer to prolong combat in your games a bit, lower the base Damage save DC to 10 + damage bonus. This provides a 50% chance of no damage, a 25% chance of a hit, a 25% chance of a stun, and no chance for an immediate knock-out or disablement between two equally-matched opponents. If you prefer some variability in your Damage saves,

either use the optional rule for damage rolls on p. 128 or set the Damage save DC at 10 + 1d6 + damage bonus.

What happens if a Disabled or Dying character takes additional damage?

Any attack that inflicts damage on a Disabled character shifts that character's condition to Dying. Any attack that inflicts damage on a Dying character shifts the character's condition to Dead. As per usual, attackers can choose to inflict a lesser effect (such as unconsciousness) if they prefer.

When a character recovers from being Unconscious or Disabled, how many hits do they have?

The same as they had before becoming Unconscious or Disabled. The character recovers hits normally (see p. 129).

How do characters pick up and throw things at each other in combat?

See the rules for Improvised Weapons on p. 112.

Does Super-Strength affect grappling checks?

Super-Strength does not add a bonus to the melee attack roll to begin grappling but it does add its normal bonus to grappling checks.

SAMPLE VILLAINS

I have questions about the sample villains' stats.

Please see the Revised Sample Villains file, which addresses issues with the game statistics of those characters. Secondary printings of the M&M core rulebook contain these revised villains.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

The sample thugs listed on p. 154 have +3 weapons even though they are only power level 1 and 2, respectively. Isn't this against the rules?

Technically, yes, however keep in mind that the Gamemaster is free to bend the power level limits as needed for the campaign. This is particularly true of NPCs, who generally don't need to be as balanced as player characters. Low-level NPCs may have items of equipment that exceed their power level, if the GM allows.

Can I use published d20 creatures in my *Mutants & Masterminds* game?

Such creatures are fairly easy to use in *Mutants & Masterminds* with just a few modifications. Basically:

- Take any ability scores the creature has over 20, divide the extra amount by two, round down, and make that the creature's rank in the appropriate super-ability.
- Give the creature a Damage saving throw bonus equal to its base Con bonus plus any natural armor bonus that it has. Subtract the natural armor bonus from its AC to calculate its new Defense. (This usually results in most monsters being easier to hit, but more difficult to hurt.)
- Divide the creature's maximum damage by 6 (round down) and make that its damage bonus, if it exceeds the creature's base Strength bonus. Otherwise, just use the Str bonus. Drop multiple attack routines and use the creature's largest damage bonus or give the creature the Rapid Strike feat.

- Convert any spell-like or supernatural abilities the creature may have into ranks in the appropriate super-powers.

Keep in mind that this system isn't 100% exact (no conversion system is), but it's a good ballpark. Tweak the stats as needed to give the creature the right feel.

Can I create a *Mutants & Masterminds* fan website?

Feel free! We only ask that you follow the restrictions of the Open Game License contained in the back of the book and observe the restrictions on Closed Content listed on the title page.

What these basically mean is that you can't use the *Mutants & Masterminds* name or logo without the permission of Green Ronin Publishing. You also can't provide information on the allocation or use of power points for character creation or advancement. That doesn't mean you can't create new powers and list their costs, just that you can't list the costs of powers from Green Ronin products or reproduce material on spending power points to create or advance characters.

Which is the best superhero RPG?

Why, *Mutants & Masterminds*, of course! It even says "The World's Greatest Superhero RPG!" right on the cover!

Seriously, this question should be phrased, "which is the best superhero RPG *for me*?" and the truth is that we can't answer that. There is a plethora of superhero roleplaying games out there, each one different in its own way, each with its good and bad points, and each with its own fans (and, often, detractors). None of them is perfect because if one was, everyone would be playing it!

Mutants & Masterminds is designed to be a medium-complexity, fast-playing game that captures the feel and the action of superhero comics. Like every hobby and every game, it's a matter of personal taste. We recommend giving M&M a try and seeing if you like it. Give some other games a try, too, if you want, and decide for yourself which is best based on which one you have the most fun playing. After all, that's what playing a game is all about, right?



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