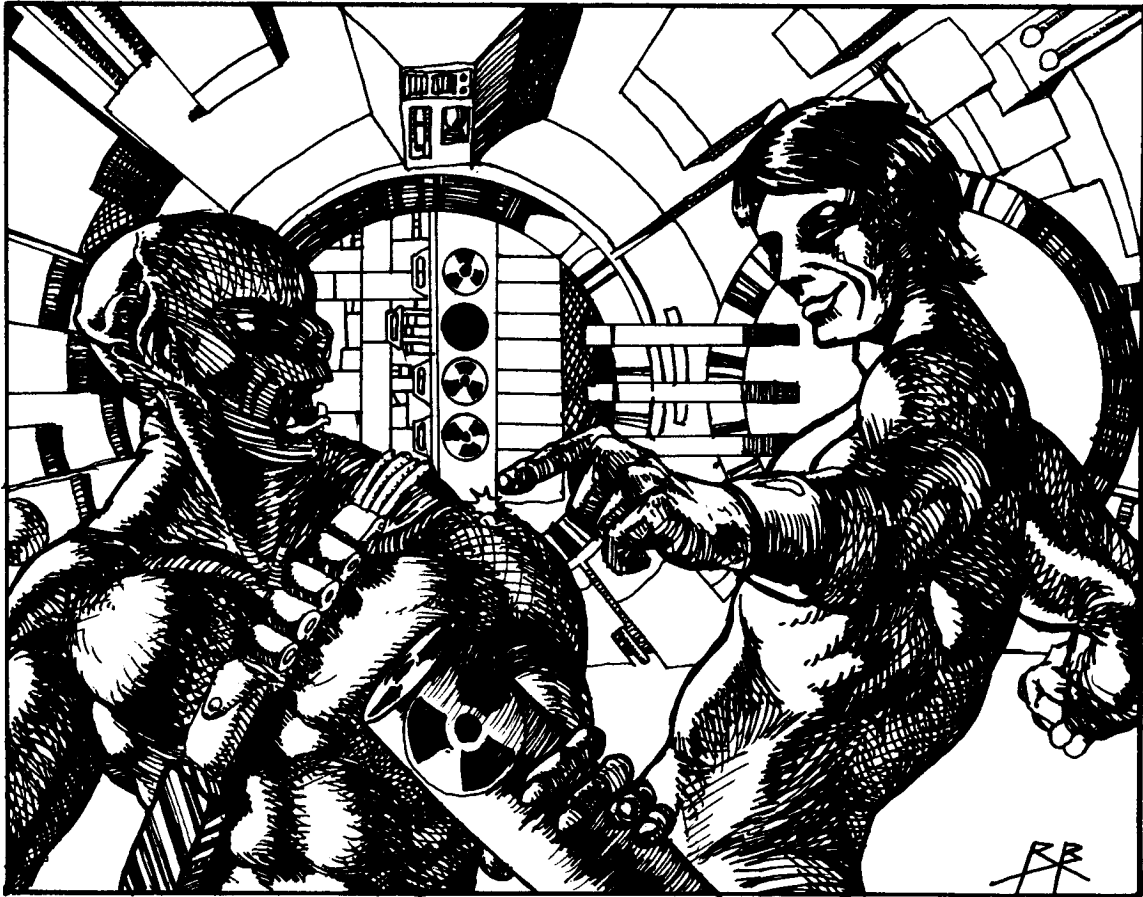


Superworld



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It is a twentieth-century world like our own, with a difference. The close observer sees that the streets and skies are patrolled by garishly-costumed men and women with powers far beyond those of ordinary mortals. This is the world of comic book superheroes, where costumed crimebusters fight powerful supervillains in the never-ending battle between good and evil.

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II. The Setting

RATIONALE

Assume that for centuries the solar system crossed a strange force field. No one noticed its effects because it influenced everything we observed.

Suddenly, Earth and sun emerged from the field. Reaction times and physical laws snapped back to what they were thousands of years before, during the Golden Age of the gods, when humans had fantastic powers whose extent is only hinted at by myth and legend.

In *Superworld*, the laws of the universe have changed to allow the fantastic abilities of superheroes.

TIME FRAME

Comicbook superheroes were first popular during World War II. You might assume that *Superworld* came out of its force field at that time, and that modern-day heroes have forty years of previous superheroes from which to build their own careers. Alternately, you can assume that the world has just emerged from the field, and the only previous experience for the burgeoning collection of caped crusaders is in the comic-books.

The third possibility is to set your *Superworld* adventures during World War II, providing a ready-made set of villains and world-conquering plots for superheroes to battle.

III. Creating a Superhero

The superhero comes from a background in which most of the skills of *Basic Role-Playing* are still valid. The noticeable differences concern the use of weapons and First Aid. Such skills are highly developed in twentieth-century America, but the number of people using them is not as general as in a primitive culture, due to our reliance on specialists.

However, anyone active enough to contemplate a superhero career will have all other *Basic Role-Playing* skills at the given percentages.

To turn your *Basic Role-Playing* character into a superhero, determine what sort of character you want him to be. Is he a mutant, with strange abilities beyond those of normal humanity? Did he get caught in a laboratory accident which changed him into a super-powered freak? Did some devious sage whisper an ancient word of power to him? Did he come from some far-off planet? Has he trained his body to perfection? Did he invent devices which provide all his powers? Develop this origin and try to attach some supporting cast members (wives, sweethearts, crippled relatives, bosses, subordinates, etc.) to his story, to give the character some breadth and richness.

What is the character's profession in his day-to-day identity? This is developed in more detail below, but when picking powers and abilities for the character, keep his origins in mind.

ASSIGNING SUPERPOWERS AND SKILLS

To create a superhero, roll the character's STR, CON, SIZ, INT, POW, DEX, and CHA on 3D6, just as shown in *Basic Role-Playing*. If any of the characteristics are below 11, you may add three to the characteristic. If the character is still not satisfactory, you can always roll up another character.

Once all the characteristics have been established, add them all together. This gives you the *Hero Points* of the character.

The Hero Points are used to "buy" superpowers and skills for the superhero. Superpowers and increased characteristics are bought in *levels* of powers or characteristics, and skills are bought in 5% increments. Left-over Hero Points can be saved for future use. Characters never improve during a game. All improvements or purchases of superpowers, skills, or increased characteristics occur between games.

Before we get into the exact mechanics, we should decide what sort of superhero we want this character to be and think up an origin and rationale for him. As an example, let us examine Kent Fraser, mild-mannered photographer.

EXAMPLE

Kent Fraser, a professional photographer for Big City Life Magazine has characteristics of STR 13, CON 16, SIZ 12, INT 14, POW 16, DEX 14, and CHA 15, totalling 110 Hero Points. When he tried to photograph San Francisco from the top of the Transamerica Building, he was struck by lightning. When he awoke, he discovered he had developed many strange electrical powers. He decided to use these powers for good as "Captain Stormcloud."

ENERGY SUPPLY

For all but a few physical and sensory powers, the hero will need energy to fuel his powers. One Hero Point will give a character 10 points of energy. Energy supply must be purchased to be used; energy supply is a superpower — see it in the Superpowers list.

EXAMPLE

Being a superhero who uses lightning, Captain Stormcloud's player realizes that his character will need lots of energy, and uses 16 Hero Points to give him 160 points of energy. This leaves him with 94 more Hero Points to spend.

SUPERPOWERS

The myriad superpowers available to superheroes are described in detail later. One or more Hero Points allow the character to obtain one level of a power. To be useful, most powers need several levels. The individual cost of each power is listed with the description.

EXAMPLE

A character with lightning as an origin should be able to throw Lightning. It costs 3 Hero Points for each 1D6 of damage done with an Energy Projection like lightning, and Captain Stormcloud's player spends 18 Hero Points to get a Lightning attack which will do 6D6 damage. He now has 76 Hero Points to spend.

The player also decides that Captain Stormcloud should fly. With his SIZ of 12, he needs 12 levels of Flight, but he wants to be able to pick up and carry the largest possible person, so he adds 18 more, for a total expenditure of 30 Hero Points for 30 levels of Flight. He has 46 Hero Points left.

SUPER CHARACTERISTICS

A superhero must be expected to have superior characteristics. The physical characteristics of STR, CON, SIZ, and DEX can be built up by one characteristic point for one Hero Point. INT, POW, and CHA can be built up at a cost of three Hero Points per characteristic point. In neither case do the increased characteristics increase in turn the available Hero Points, though it is possible to increase Hero Points by other methods.

EXAMPLE

The player decided that the lightning bolt energized Captain Stormcloud's muscles, so that he can deal massive blows, and also increased his reflexes so he can get in the first blow. He adds 12 to the character's STR of 13 to give him a STR of 25 (just enough for a 2D6 damage add) and 6 to the character's DEX of 14, to give him a DEX of 20. This costs a further 18 Hero Points, leaving him with 28 Hero Points.

SUPER SKILLS

There are many skills available to modern day superheroes besides the ones in *Basic Role-Playing*. Full descriptions are given in a following chapter. Any skill, including the *Basic Role-Playing* skills, can be increased in the beginning character by spending one Hero Point for a 5% increase.

EXAMPLE

Captain Stormcloud's player decides to give his character a bit of acrobatic experience from his college days as a gymnast. He spends 2 Hero Points on Acrobatics, raising the character from his normal 5% to 15%. He now has 26 Hero Points left.

DISABILITIES

A character as conceived by his player may not have sufficient Hero Points to meet the needs of the concept. In other words, the player may need more Hero Points to fix up the character as he wants him than are available from the character's original characteristics.

The player may apply disabilities, as described later in this chapter, to give the character more Hero Points. These disabilities must be true problems which give the character a challenge to overcome. An acute hangnail is not a problem worthy of extra Hero Points for a superhero.

EXAMPLE

Captain Stormcloud's player wants to give his character the ability to absorb 18 points from electrical attacks a melee round to refuel his energy (a cost of 18 Hero Points), 12 points of physical armor to absorb kinetic energy from fists, bullets, heat, cold, sonics, etc., (a cost of 12 Hero Points), 12 points of radiation armor against lasers and hard radiation (a cost of 12 more Hero Points), and 4 extra points of CON (4 more Hero Points). The total cost in Hero Points is 18+12+12+4, or 46 Hero Points. However, he has only 26 Hero Points left.

To get the other 20 Hero Points, he must accept some disabilities. Reviewing the origin of the character, he decides that the lightning bolt adversely affected Captain Stormcloud's vision and hearing. He gives him a permanent limit of 5% on his Spot Hidden Item roll (reducing his Basic Role-Playing chance from 25% to 5%) which is worth 4 Hero Points, and a permanent limit of 15% on his Listen Roll (reducing his Basic Role-Playing chance from 45% to 15%) which is worth 6 Hero Points. For the remaining 10 points needed, he decides that water, such as a rainstorm, leeches away Captain Stormcloud's energy at a rate of 10 energy points a melee round. This limitation is worth a further 10 Hero Points, giving him the full 20 extra Hero Points he needs to buy the powers he wants for the character.

LIMITS OF CREATION

When building a character, the player must keep the reality of the character in mind. Powers should have a consistent rationale. Build on the character's origin, his background before he became super, and the "style" of his powers. Characters with great strength rarely need to be martial artists. A stealthy character, using powers like Invisibility, has little use

for massive armor. Also, disabilities should be real and appropriate to the character. An allergy to oak wood is not a reason for gaining Hero Points, unless the allergy does 1D6 damage every time the character is within 10 meters of it.

INCREASED HERO POINTS

As with *Basic Role-Playing* and all of the other Chaosium role-playing games, a character may improve with each skill he possesses. These include the Throw and Fist skills so necessary to the successful superhero, and the new skills introduced in this game.

But is it possible to increase in superhero powers? Can one improve the damage done by a lightning bolt, increase the amount of armor available, etc?

The answer is yes, and the ability to increase depends on luck and POW. Every time a character (1) makes a luck roll by rolling POW as a percentage, or (2) successfully overcomes another's POW on the resistance table, or (3) successfully resists another's POW on the resistance table, he has a chance of increasing his POW by 1D3. This automatically raises his Hero Points by the amount rolled on the 1D3, and those points may be used immediately anywhere the character wants another level of power, or maybe saved from increase to increase for later use.

The chance of raising the POW of the character is found by subtracting the current POW of the character from 25 and then rolling the result or less on 1D20. If successful, the POW has been increased.

By logical extension, any character making an idea roll, a dodge roll, a persuasion roll, a CON roll, or a STR roll by rolling the current value of the appropriate characteristic as a percentage, may also attempt to increase that attribute and gain in Hero Points, just as can be done with POW. SIZ cannot be increased in this way, though Hero Points gained elsewhere can be used to increase SIZ.

DISABILITY POINTS

Disabilities which provide extra Hero Points fall into two categories:

1. **CHARACTER FAILINGS** — These are physical, mental, or cultural problems besetting the character which take away from his total capability. These failings are generally worth 5 to 10 Hero Points.
2. **POWER MODIFIERS** — These are modifications to powers as they are described in the rules. Each modification's worth is based on how much it limits the power.

OTHER DISABILITIES

There are many possible disabilities a character might have. Referees should feel free to invent more disabilities for heroes, always keeping the reality and rationale of each character in mind. If the character takes 2D6 damage from proximity to fire, why? Is he an alien from another planet who has never seen an open flame? The disabilities should come out of the hero's powers or from logical extrapolation from his background before he became a superhero.

In any case, the disability total should never get above the original Hero Points of the character. More than that, many disabilities will make the character virtually useless, no matter what sort of incredible powers have been bought with the