

Building a Better Hero, Volume 1

Version 1.2

Contact Information & Disclaimers:

This unofficial resource was created for use with the Marvel Super Heroes Adventure Game™ SAGA Rules. While every effort has been made to make these statistics as accurate as possible, the statistics contained herein are unofficial and represent only one man's opinion on the characters and their capabilities. While the game is currently out of print, I do encourage you to make every effort to locate and utilize any official materials that you can. For the most part, they are first-rate materials.

I really appreciate any user feedback. If you noticed any errors, or have questions or comments about these statistics, please let me know by sending a clearly labeled (i.e. - won't be mistaken for Spam) e-mail to: MSHAGLibrarian@wmconnect.com.

Disclaimer 1: I have no official connection with TSR, Wizards of the Coast, Hasbro, Marvel Comics, or any other company or entity that owns the intellectual property rights to the characters or game mechanics. No connection – either expressed or implied – is intended.

Disclaimer 2: The Marvel Super Heroes Adventure Game™ SAGA Rules is Copyright © and Trademark™ TSR, Property of Wizards of the Coast, a Hasbro Company. No official or copyrighted materials relating to the Marvel SAGA game are contained within this document.

Disclaimer 3: Characters, Character Names, and the distinct likenesses thereof are Copyright © and Trademark™ their respective owners and are used without permission.

For more information and game materials, please see the Marvel Superheroes Yahoo Group (<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/mshag/>) or my website (<http://hl.ripway.com/mshaglibrary/index.html>).

Summary & Description:

This is the first in a series of documents detailing important aspects of character creation for the Marvel Super Heroes Adventure Game, SAGA rules. This article includes instructions for the most common hero archetypes, and perhaps a few things you hadn't thought of. This article is based upon the idea that you are using the optional point-based creation house rules, but the theory can be applied to the official card-based creation system, as well (or to any other rules systems, for that matter).

First, let me give you some overall theory, and then I'll get into the various hero templates. While I will often give guidelines for key stats, the stats themselves are not all-important; they will merely make some of your character's more common tasks easier. A character with 16 Strength can be more or less *interesting* than a character with 20 Strength because characterization is something that the stats cannot really dictate to you. The attitude of the character is something that should be unique to the character, because characterization is the single most important aspect of a good character (file that under D for "Duh"). However, a hero with 20 Strength will have a much easier time in a fistfight with the Thing than a hero with 16 Strength. The Thing's natural defense is a 22, so the points-gap for the stronger hero is only two points, while the weaker hero has 6 points to make up. (The opposite is true, as well - the stronger character has a naturally higher

defense and is harder for the Thing to hurt.) This shouldn't be your only consideration in hero creation, but it should be in the back of your mind. Of course, you should also keep your hero concept in mind when making these decisions. If you're not making a character that should be able to go toe-to-toe with the Thing, then don't give him the stats to do so. To give yourself a better idea of the character's concept, ask yourself some questions about the character.

- “What is this character's purpose?” If he's intended to be a front-line fighter that soaks up damage, you'll want to check out Strongman. If he is a support fighter that is intended to avoid damage, perhaps Acrobat, Flier, Martial Artist, or All-Rounder would be a better option. Mages, Energy Users, and Psionics usually make good long-distance fighters. A Gizmo User could be pretty much any of these things, depending on his equipment: just make sure you have the right gear to do the job.
- “What are his strengths?” Chances are your character won't be good at everything, but he's sure to be good at something. Make sure that you make your character's Skills fit his hero concept. If your hero is supposed to be dumb, he probably shouldn't have many Intellect skills. If he's a doctor or professor, he should probably have mostly Intellect skills. If you're putting together a rookie hero, then world-class skills are probably out of place, even if you're lucky enough to afford them. If your hero used to be a police officer, he might have police-type skills, such as Marksmanship and Law Enforcement, but it's unlikely that he'll have Time Machinery or Super-Physiology.
- “What are his weaknesses?” Chances are your character will have a couple chinks in his armor. Even such versatile powerhouses as the Silver Surfer are vulnerable to something. Perhaps it's a limit on a power or maybe it's a Hindrance or two. Maybe it's just a natural lack of defense versus a certain type of attack (like energy or psionic). Whatever it is, make sure that your character has a few chinks in his armor. He won't want to advertise these, but heroes need something to improve upon.

Your battle strategy isn't the only thing you should keep in mind when fleshing out your character concept. In fact, it's the less important of the two major areas you're developing. Remember that the character isn't just a set of numbers on a sheet of paper. It's supposed to represent a living, breathing human being (in the larger than life comic book universe of your choice). The numbers you're developing are simply what the character can do; a summary of his capabilities. The true test of the character is in the mostly intangible realm of characterization. It's *how* you play the character that counts. Keeping this in mind, however, you may want to look to the statistics for certain aspects of the character's attitude. The Thing is smarter than your average Strongman, so he's rightfully proud of his cunning in battle. Colossus is faster than he looks, which he points out constantly (sometimes to the annoyance of readers and foes alike). For a long time, Kitty Pryde's inexperience led to her being timid and reserved in battle. Think about what the stats mean to your character, not just how they relate to your ratio of successful to failed actions. The same statistical concept can become a very different character in the hands of each different player. Again, ask yourself some questions to clarify things. The important part is to understand how the hero (not you personally) is affected by the various aspects of his life.

- Will a low Intellect score lead to low self-esteem? (“Sometimes I just feel so dumb.”)

- Or will it lead to pride over a different, higher ability score? (“Dear lord, I am just so strong and muscular!”)
- Will the Empathy power lead to a more sensitive character? (“I can feel your pain. Please, let me help you to deal with this.”)
- Or will he become a more controlled character? (“I can feel your anger, but I cannot let your emotions become my own.”)

These are the kinds of questions that you should ask yourself during creation, because they are the types of questions that are most important to a character. Once you have created your character’s concept, try to keep yourself in the character’s frame of mind during gameplay.

- Don’t think: “What should I do next?”
- Think: “What would [the character] do next?”

The ten official templates (taken from the MSHAG Game Book, pg. 199), and four custom templates are listed, for a total of fourteen templates. The ten original templates are: Energy User, Gizmo User, Mage, Martial Artist, Psionic, Shapechanger, Speedster, Strongman, Super-Scientist, and World Spanner. Please note that the information listed is based upon – but not the same as – that listed on pages 198-199 of the Game Book. I added the Acrobat, All-Rounder, Flier, and Summoner templates to accommodate those heroes whose powers do not seem to fit into one of the original templates. Often a character can be a mix of these templates, so feel free to customize. For example, Spidey could be an acrobat or an all-rounder, Rogue is a Strongman with a touch of Flier, and Wolverine is really God with claws.

Understanding the Template:

Template Title (alternate titles)

Examples: List of characters that qualify for the template in no particular order.

Key Powers: List of Powers that you simply must have in order of importance.

Key Skills: List of Skills that you simply must have in order of importance.

Minimum / Recommended Stats: The first number is the Minimum score you'll want in the listed statistic. You probably should not go lower than the Minimum. The number after the slash (/) is the Recommended score of the statistic. You'll want a score that's around the recommended number for maximum effect. A lower number will lower your effectiveness, but a higher number might be a waste, unless the number is denoted with a plus (+).

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	Min # / Rec #
Agility	Min # / Rec #
Intellect	Min # / Rec #
Willpower	Min # / Rec #
Edge	The lowest Edge your character should have for maximum effect.
Minimum Number of Skills	The minimum number of skills your character should have to use the template effectively.

Rundown:

The Rundown gives you general advice, tips, and strategies that you may use during creation or during gameplay.

Acrobat (a.k.a. Gymnast)

Examples: Spider-Man, Beast, Nightcrawler

Key Powers: Agility 10+

Key Skills: Acrobatics, Martial Arts, Contingent Attack

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	5 / 7
Agility	10 / 11+
Intellect	4 / 5
Willpower	4 / 5
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	2 (Acrobatics + Martial Arts)

Rundown:

The Acrobat archetype is based upon the idea that you are the epitome of physical dexterity and nimble motion. There is no more important statistic to the Acrobat than Agility, so you'll probably want a superhuman score (11+). Acrobats don't usually go head-on against a foe, so Intellect is a good idea, too. You'll want a 5+ in INT, which will be sufficient enough to form your fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants maneuvers and keep your mind as agile as your body. And you'll never forgive yourself if you don't get the Martial Arts skill, which will let you bring your agility to bear against a foe, should you choose to.

How often does Nightcrawler get into a straight-up fistfight? Not often. He feints, ducks, jumps, and teleports to distract an opponent and hit him many times from many directions without taking any hits himself. He'll wear down stronger foes, or distract them until a teammate can give him back up. Even heroes with strength scores on the higher end of the scale (like Beast and Spider-Man) often utilize hit-and-run tactics in their battles. Spidey doesn't stand and duke it out with the Rhino, he utilizes his intelligence and agility, keeping a safe distance and luring his foe into unfavorable conditions or a makeshift trap. Your main strategy as an Acrobat is to avoid danger and direct confrontation when facing off against tougher foes. Either you'll take your opponent out through cunning, or just wear him down until your Strongman teammate can grind his bones into dust. Of course, against weaker foes, "letting 'em have it" is much more fun. Acrobats are highly effective against swarms of street-level foes, like thugs and minions. If you want a good place to spend some points, try alternate forms of movement, such as teleportation, wall-crawling, etc. These are good abilities to purchase to make your hero more versatile without making him more 'powerful' than you planned. Alternately, you might want to spend a few points on some signature equipment (of the unpowered variety), like Body Armor or a striking weapon (sword or club) of +2 to +4. This can help to make up for your hero's inherently weak Strength-based scores.

All-Rounder (a.k.a. Jack of All Trades, Balanced)

Examples: Wolverine, Spider-Man, Captain America

Key Powers: Above Average Abilities

Key Skills: Lots of diverse skills.

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
-----------	-----------

Strength	7 / 8 –10
Agility	7 / 8 –10
Intellect	5 / 6+
Willpower	5 / 6+
Edge	3+
Minimum Number of Skills	2 (Acrobatics, Martial Arts)

Rundown:

The All-Rounder is pretty good at everything, but probably not great at anything (which is funny because all the examples I listed happen to be really good at something). The All-Rounder probably collects skills like most people collect baseball cards. All his stats will probably be above average, but not super-high. For example, Wolverine has peak human abilities in almost everything, as does Captain America, but not really many superhuman scores or abilities. Both have lots of skills that make them really good at fighting, even when out of their weight class (In comics, both have faced off against Hulk, and come away with a draw, though his physical strength advantage would seem insurmountable). High Edge reigns supreme for these guys, because card play really is everything to a guy that relies on talent. You'll want at least a 3 Edge, probably a 4 (like Captain America has, and Wolverine *should* have). Anything that allows you to gain cards back faster helps out, too, so having Regeneration can almost feel like cheating.

All-Rounders usually have many strategies, as they are the embodiment of flexibility. An All-Rounder can (in theory) flourish in almost any given situation. They are usually good enough to serve as a "lite" version of nearly any template. Cap and Wolvie are both agile enough to be a low-powered Acrobat, for example, and their respective equipment could make up the gap while serving as a low-powered Strongman (but I don't think either are too good at flying). Once again, unpowered equipment is your friend. You may – like Cap or Wolvie – even spring for a single piece of serious (+5 or higher) signature equipment.

Energy User (a.k.a. Elemental, Energy Wielder)

Examples: Cyclops, Human Torch, Magneto

Key Powers: Energy Blast or an Intellect-Based "Control" power of 10+ intensity

Key Skills: Energy Control, Acrobatics

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	4 / 5
Agility	4 / 6 – 7
Intellect	4 / 6
Willpower	5 / 7
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	1 (Energy Control)

Rundown:

An Energy User will want enough strength to keep him in a fight after one or two hits, but shouldn't expect to last long in straight-up physical combat. Anything more than 6 in strength is probably a waste of points (unless the guy is a demigod or something) for

your average game. You'll also want enough agility to give you a chance to dodge some blows, but again, not much more than 6 or so. The strategy behind an energy wielder is to avoid damage, either a) by using a force field or similar power to prevent it, or b) by dropping your foes before they hurt you. Either way, your strategy will probably be to keep foes from closing to within striking distance so that you can blast physical threats before they reach you. Against other energy wielders, your best chance is to hit them first. The best way to accomplish this feat is to be a better aim than they are; hence the Energy Control skill. Intellect helps to avoid being surprised, and also determines declaration order, so don't skimp too much; you want to attack as early and often as possible. Don't forget to take advantage of surprised or unaware foes by using the Aiming technique detailed on page 34 of the Game Book. The acrobatics skill could help you out if you find yourself being hit too often. You may want to spend a few of your left over points on power stunts or perhaps some skills (anything that will help you improve your chances of successful attacks against foes or increase your chance of successfully defending against attacks is ideal). Again, you might consider some unpowered Body Armor of +2 to +4 if you have points left over.

Flier (a.k.a. Aerial Combatant)

Examples: Angel, Vulture, Rogue

Key Powers: Flight 10+ (or a power / equipment that grants flight)

Key Skills: Aerial Combat, Acrobatics

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	4 / 5
Agility	6 / 8 –10
Intellect	5 / 6-7
Willpower	5 / 7
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	2 (Acrobatics, Aerial Combat)

Rundown:

A Flier is the master of Aerial Combat. Regardless of the source of the character's flight (from wings to rocket-powered boots) there is one thing they all have in common: they feel as at home in the air as on the ground, if not more so. The Aerial Combat skill is a must-have for any Flier, and Acrobatics is also helpful. As a Flier, your primary stat will be Agility, but don't neglect Strength. Many people believe that flier is a weak choice, at least until their jet transport explodes in mid-air and the Flier saves their sorry butts from going splat on the pavement. Fliers may or may not have the means to dish out major damage, but if not, they can take a leaf out of the Acrobat's playbook and use cunning misdirection to trick foes into harming each other. Also, a Flier with a distance attack can ensure that he stays at Firing Distance by flying at altitude. A solid Flight score will be needed both to attack and to avoid attacks, as well as a myriad of other flight-related tasks (such as catching the falling heroes in my example). Pony up the points for at least a 10+ and spring for the Mach Control stunt unless you want to "sonic boom" the world silly (and really annoy your neighbors). Sometimes making acrobatic moves or sudden direction changes during flight can require an Agility action, so you'll want a 6 agility

bare minimum, but an 8 would be ideal. The Acrobatics skill (aside from helping with movement) can help to minimize damage from falling should something go wrong and your hero falls earthward.

Gizmo User (a.k.a. Technology User, Tech-head, Gadget User)

Examples: Iron Man, War Machine, Mach-1

Key Powers: Agility and Intellect for creating items,

Key Skills: Appropriate Item Creation skills, appropriate Item Use skills, Repair, Gadgetry

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	3 / 4
Agility	4 / 6
Intellect	6 / 8
Willpower	4 / 6
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	4 (Gadgetry, Repair, One related creation skill, One operating skill)

Rundown:

A Gizmo User usually doesn't have any real superpowers of his own. His claim to fame is his gear, and how well he wields it, which in all fairness is usually pretty well. Some people may think that just anyone can take up the character's gear and become that hero. Well, these people haven't thought about edge, skills, and personality. They should be foremost in *your* mind, however, when you are making your hero. You'll want to pony up the points for skills if you want to set your hero apart from the armored masses. Buy world-class skills if you can afford them, you'll be glad you did. (If your Narrator uses the optional "Master Class" skills rules, this is a cheap middle-ground between good and great - take advantage of it.) Aside from whatever skills you need to operate your gizmos more effectively (Aerial Combat, Piloting or the like), it would be a good choice to pick Gadgetry to make new gizmos, and Repair so that you can make repairs and modifications to your existing equipment. Another solid choice may be Bionics, Computers, Electronics, Mechanics, or Weapons Systems (depending on the nature of your equipment) so that you can make fancier items to improve upon or replace lost, stolen, or damaged equipment. Having multiple related skills doesn't help much with creating equipment (since the bonuses don't stack), so feel free to specialize in one skill (it's better to have one world-class skill than eight similar normal skills). This is all assuming that you want to make your own gear; some heroes don't. Considering how important equipment is to the average Gizmo User, and how easy it is to destroy most equipment, most Gizmo Users will want to at least be able to fix their own stuff. Also keep in mind that the better your hero is at making stuff, the better his equipment can become. You don't have to spend all your points at hero creation on powerful starting equipment. Your hero can make or improve it afterwards with a few successful Intellect actions. Also remember that it's cheaper to build than to buy. Additionally, you would do well to keep in mind that it's easier to keep your secret identity a secret when you don't have to trust a hired inventor to keep the secret for you. If you buy your stuff, you'd

better be sure you can trust the salesman. Otherwise, figuring out the secret identity of the latest armored hero could be as easy as checking the name of the receipt.

Something to keep in mind when creating items for your hero (or commissioning them to be made for him) is the features list on page 124 of the MSHAG Game Book. Any of the features are useful in their own right, but the following are particularly helpful: Backup Power, Coded, CommLink, and EMP Protection. These will let you stay in touch with your teammates, help you to avoid the dreaded “one-hit KO” from magnetic control or electrical control, and keep the hero’s equipment in the hero’s hands.

Mage (a.k.a. Magician, Sorcerer, Wizard)

Examples: Dr. Strange, Dr. Druid

Key Powers: Magic 10+

Key Skills: Mental Control, Occult, Meditation, Observation

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	3 / 4
Agility	3 / 4
Intellect	7 / 8
Willpower	10 / 11+
Edge	3+
Minimum Number of Skills	2 (Occult, Mental Control)

Rundown:

Mages are not known for their vast physical powers. In fact, as far as bodies go, they tend to be rather puny. Spending more than 4 points in each of your physical attributes would leave you short of the precious points you need to fuel your massive mystical powers. Due to the limiting Willpower factor, you’ll need double the points of an energy wielder with equal intensity. This is fine, due to the fact that Magic is so versatile that you can do pretty much anything with it. You won’t need high scores in physical abilities because you’ll have powers like Force Field and Energy Blast to make up for it. Once you hit true mage status (at intensity 10 or higher), you can duplicate pretty much any power with an Intellect or Willpower trump suit, except for a few restrictions (see both the Hero Creation FAQ and the Game FAQ for more details). One such restriction is that you cannot improve your Ability scores with a spell. If this bothers you, you may want to pick up Ability Boost – even 4 points would be enough to double your physical scores, and the Dual Ability Boost stunt will allow you to boost two abilities at once, making it an even better value. If this doesn’t bother you, you might want to choose some other ‘mystical’ type powers, such as ESP, Precognition, Postcognition, Telepathy, etc. In my experience, it’s usually better to choose versatility over raw power. So pick your powers and skills over your intensities, i.e. if there are three powers that you want, you are better off getting 3 powers at intensity 3 (or some other combination) than 1 intensity 9 power. Remember that you can play cards to a power, and/or you can push a power, but only if you already have it.

Martial Artist (a.k.a. Ninja, Monk, Melee Master)

Examples: Shang-Chi, Iron Fist

Key Powers: Ability Boost, Chi, Leaping

Key Skills: Martial Arts, Contingent Attack, Martial Arts Weapons, Boxing, Brawling, various weapons skills, Thievery, Espionage

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	5 / 8
Agility	7 / 10 – 12
Intellect	3 / 5
Willpower	6 / 8+
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	1 (Martial Arts)

Rundown:

At first, the Martial Artist appears to be quite similar to the Acrobat template, but there are some important differences. Like the Acrobat, the Martial Artist relies mainly on Agility to overcome his foes. However, unlike the Acrobat, the Martial Artist is a master of many forms of armed and unarmed combat and so won't hesitate to take a foe – or even many foes - head-on. The Martial Artist uses technique and training to push his body to the peak of human perfection and beyond. The Martial Artist has mastered the use of his body as a weapon, but is often also a master of many oriental-style weapons. With the mastery of such powers as Chi, the Martial Artist's power of mind over matter is truly impressive, allowing him a seemingly superhuman level of endurance and tolerance to pain. Some of his abilities may seem to border on the magical, such as his ability to leap great distances or channel bursts of energy into powerful physical attacks. The Martial Artist in this template goes way beyond the average person that learns Karate.

Agility is the most important aspect of the Martial Artist's arsenal. It is the Martial Artist's main source for both offense (attacking) and defense (dodging). However, since the Martial Artist is a melee combat specialist, you won't want to skimp on Strength, either. Unlike an Acrobat, a Martial Artist can take quite a few punches from street level opponents without falling. Martial Artists will also want to load up on skills to make him more effective at his role. Obviously, all Martial Artists will need the Martial Arts skill. Other useful combat skills include: Contingent Attack, Flinging, Martial Arts Weapons, Boxing, Brawling, and various weapons skills (Swords, Clubs, Whips, etc.). Those Martial Artists interested in the arts of stealth (and that's most of them) might want to check out Thievery, Escape Artistry, and Espionage.

Psionic (a.k.a. Telepath, Mentalist, Psychic)

Examples: Professor X, Psylocke, Phoenix, White Queen

Key Powers: One or more of: Emotion Control, Empathy, Hypnosis, Illusion, Mind Control, Pheromones, Psychic Blast, Psi-Screen, or Telepathy. Preferred intensities are at 8+

Key Skills: Mental Control, Meditation

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	4 / 5

Agility	4 / 6
Intellect	4 / 6 – 8
Willpower	8 / 10+
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	2 (Mental Control, Observation)

Rundown:

A Psionic is the master of the mind. She may (or may not) be weak of the body, but the powers she possesses helps her to make up for it. Psionics are the undisputed masters of ‘Cheese Combat’ – no that doesn’t mean using cheddar as a weapon. It means that the enemy will literally never know what hit him, thanks to the ability to take ‘cheap shots’ at opponents. Thoughts and emotions are the Psionic’s playground. Whereas a Strongman can beat opponents into submission, a Psionic can end a fight before a punch has even been thrown. Anybody and everybody should fear a powerful Psionic character, because the most powerful body in the world is only helpful to the mind that controls it. The Psionic hero has the tools to make sure that she is that mind. Hypnosis allows for domination of a mind without assuming complete control of it. In addition to the exciting (or frightening, depending on your point of view) prospect of flat out controlling the mind of your toughest opponents, the Psionic mind can also be very tricky. Illusions and deception are the bread and butter of many Psionics (especially villainous ones), and such trickery gives yet another way for unwary heroes to be pitted against each other or their environment. Alone or in combination with other powers, Emotion Control can be devastating, making a hero quake in fear or seethe with uncontrollable rage. Stunts like Sedation can render a foe unconscious in a single attack, while stunts like Stunning or Psychic Weapon can hammer an opponent with Willpower-defended damage. As if all of this isn’t bad enough, stunts like Rangeless and Telelocation allow a powerful psychic character to attack an enemy that’s out of visual distance, sometimes even miles away.

Even if things do close to melee, don’t expect an easy battle; some telepaths are so acute that they can read the planned actions of enemies before they launch them, granting them a sort of Danger Sense. This combination of powers and talents makes Alpha-Level Psionics extremely difficult opponents.

Another boon of the Psionic hero is the ease of expansion. Many Narrators allow the base power of related powers to be gained as a stunt of another power (I am one of them). It’s only a stone’s throw from thoughts to emotions, after all. And if a telepath can insert words into your mind, why not thoughts, pictures, or urges?

While a Psionic certainly isn’t the end-all and be-all of the gaming world, the tendency to overlook Willpower gives a Psionic hero a veritable shooting gallery of easy targets against many teams and characters. It’s possible for an Alpha-Psi to score a “one-hit KO” against roughly half the Marvel Universe – and that’s a lot of universe. Think of it this way: anyone with a score of 10 or less in Willpower won’t last more than a round or so against a dedicated Psionic hero without additional psionic defenses (Psi-Screen, Resistance, etc.). It’s tough to fight when you’re sleeping, and the Sedation stunt will make sure you’re getting sleepy... very, very sleepy.

Shapechanger (a.k.a. Shapeshifter, Changeling, Metamorph)

Examples: Tigra, Atlas, Mystique

Key Powers: One or more of: Animal Form, Body Transformation, Density Control, Imitation, Shapeshifting, Size Alteration. Preferred Intensities 9-12.

Key Skills: None

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	5 / 7
Agility	5 / 7
Intellect	4 / 5
Willpower	3 / 6
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	0

Rundown:

Whether possessing many forms or only one, the shapechanging hero can alter her form to become someone or something else. Shapeshifting powers run the gamut from mimicry to alteration, but all of them can be useful. Some heroes can change size, growing to massive proportions, or shrinking to microscopic size. Some can change the physical make-up of their bodies, becoming as liquid as water or as tough as steel and some can even become a being of living energy. Some can become animals, or human-animal hybrids, gaining the powers of the animals. Shapeshifters tend to be stealthy and sneaky, since their ability to change form provides them with an easy way to surprise foes.

Speedster (a.k.a. Super-Speedster)

Examples: Quicksilver, Aurora, The Runner, The Whizzer

Key Powers: Lightning Speed 10+

Key Skills: Fast Exit

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	4 / 5
Agility	7 / 10
Intellect	4 / 5
Willpower	4 / 6
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	1

Rundown:

A Speedster is all about speed (duh!). He thrives on being the fastest, and thus, the first to hit. Fast Exit is almost a required skill - without it, your opponent gets a counterattack and that pretty much negates the point of traveling at the speed of sound or faster. Also, unload your points into your Lightning Speed - it's practically pointless to have a score lower than your Agility and in most cases, the Lightning Speed's intensity will be used in place of Strength for attacking, so you want it to be high. If you're getting Lightning Speed for the stunts: don't. Just get the original power; it'd be better that way anyway. Agility is also very important to the Speedster. Maneuvering will be quite common and in most cases requires an Agility action. A 7 will get you by in most instances, but you'll want to get as close to 10 as you can, though you don't necessarily

need superhuman scores.

As for the rest of your stats, don't neglect Willpower, since a psionic attack is one of the few things that speed won't help you dodge (see Psionic, above). Speedsters should also watch out for heroes with Telekinesis or a Force Field (particularly with the Feedback stunt); it could really hurt to run into a Force Field at 500 mph, and all the foot speed in the world won't help you if you can't touch the ground to run. Intellect is pretty important for thinking fast on your feet and formulating battle plans, but a 5 should be enough for most purposes. Strength won't be used often, so if you have to skimp on something, Strength is the place to do it.

Strongman (a.k.a. Brick, Powerhouse, Muscleman, et al)

Examples: Thing, Colossus, Hulk

Key Powers: Strength 15+, Body Armor, Resistance, Absorption.

Key Skills: Strength-based combat skills, like: Boxing, Brawling, Wrestling, Sonic Slam, Hyper-Breath.

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	15 / 16+
Agility	3 / 7
Intellect	3 / 5
Willpower	5 / 6 – 7
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	0

Rundown:

The Strongman archetype is based upon the idea that you are the pinnacle of physical strength and toughness. There is no more important stat to the Strongman than Strength. You'll want a 15 at the very least, even a lightweight like Spider-Man has a 14 Strength, so if you're planning on going toe-to-toe with the big boys, you'll want a higher Strength score. Ideally, you'd want a 16+ up to the maximum of 20 (if you are immortal, by all means go higher). Good ideas for a secondary power may be Body Armor, Absorption (Kinetics, including physical attacks), or Resistance to Physical Attacks. Of those, Resistance has the most flexibility, but Body Armor is more common. You're all about taking damage and lots of it, so anything that allows you to do that and keep ticking is ideal. A good way to do this is to spend your start-up points on a high edge and Strength, and save the secondary stats (Body Armor, Agility, Willpower) for adventure bonuses. The extra cards are invaluable to dishing out and taking damage, so you can't go wrong there.

Skills aren't necessary to the Strongman, since having so much strength can be overpowering on its own. However, any skill that helps you harness your massive Strength to be even more formidable will be greatly useful. So, if you have a few points to spare, you could do worse than springing for some combat skills.

Agility may or may not be important to your Strongman. Since they are built like a tank, taking hits doesn't always mean taking damage, so dodging blows – while nice— isn't overly important.

Note: “transforming” heroes (such as those with Ability Boost or Animal Form) are less than ideal as Strongmen because the one-turn lag it takes to pump up or transform can

make them vulnerable to an attack from a Strongman that is already strong. In the comics, the hero will almost always have time to change into their super-strong form, but the game mechanics can make the lag very annoying. Unless your Narrator has some sort of “instant transformation” clause you are practically guaranteed to be hit at least once before you have a chance to fight back.

Summoner (a.k.a. Controller, Swarmer)

Examples: Ant-Man, Moonstar

Key Powers: One or more of: Animal Control, Animation, Duplication, Image Summoning, Pheromones, Plant Control, or Teleportation at intensity 10+

Key Skills: Mental Control, Animal Control, Art

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	3 / 4 – 7
Agility	3 / 4 – 7
Intellect	4 / 5
Willpower	4 / 7+
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	1 (Mental Control)

Rundown:

The Summoner isn't so much dangerous in and of himself; it's the accessories he brings with him. Whether he controls packs of animals, swarms of insects, or even a flock of flying toasters, the most dangerous part of your hero is what he can do with seemingly harmless objects in the environment. The whole point of being a Summoner is to have others do the fighting for you. Who needs superhuman strength, when you can simply summon a raging beast to do your bidding (image summoning)? Who needs claws when you can send a pack of tigers after your foe (Animal Control)? Teleportation is listed only for the Summoning stunt.

The Art skill is helpful to Image Summoners who plan to do their own drawings. The Animal Handling skill is helpful to Animal Controllers.

Even with most of your points being sunk into your summoning power(s), you'll still have a bit of room to play around with your other scores. You can mix and match your abilities based upon your concept of your hero. Do you want a fairly strong fighter with above average Strength and Agility scores? Or maybe you'd prefer a quiet thinker with a higher Intellect and Edge? Whatever your decision, you should probably have the points to play around with.

Super-Scientist (a.k.a. Brainiac, Genius)

Examples: Reed Richards, Doctor Doom, Hank Pym

Key Powers: Intellect 8+, One or Two Powers or Gizmos at intensity 13+

Key Skills: Scientific Genius (this allows you to choose up to 8 *science* skills to start off with and allows you to gain unlimited skills, so long as they are all *science* skills).

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	4

Agility	5
Intellect	7 / 8 – 12
Willpower	5 / 6 – 8
Edge	3+
Minimum Number of Skills	1 (Scientific Genius)

Rundown:

Super-Scientists are the mental equivalent of a Strongman. They are the epitome of Intelligence and mental dexterity. Now, some people may think that Intelligence isn't all that helpful in a battle, but a solid strategy can make up for a lot of deficiencies. "Think Fast" is the battlecry of Super Scientists everywhere, and they've got the brains to be sure that they think faster than you. Think of it this way: Mr. Fantastic – statistically the weakest member of the Fantastic Four – very nearly beat the Hulk one-on-one in hand-to-hand combat. True, he came up a little short, but even recognized heavy-hitters like Thing, Colossus, and Thor have faced far worse defeats at the hands of the Green Goliath. Nor is strategy the only way that Super-Scientists can harm you. They can create devices, solve dilemmas, and spot loopholes in a villain's plans like there's no tomorrow. If you happen to be trapped in an alternate dimension with nothing but 30 seconds and the spare parts from a toaster oven standing between you and certain doom, you can rest easy that you'll be safe at home with a tasty snack and 10 seconds to spare.

While Super-Scientists don't usually pack as much gear as the Gizmo User, they do usually have a gadget or two at their disposal, and if not, they can always whip one up using whatever happens to be handy at the time. However, the Gizmo User tends to have a full-body suit of equipment that turns them into the technological equivalent of a mutant or mutata. The Super-Scientist's field gear tends to be small, hand-held, and specific to solving a single problem. A few examples of these types of gadgets may be laser cannons (Energy Blast), containment cubes (Ensnarement), force field generators (Force Field), or even capture collars (Nullification).

Super-Scientists can – and often do – build extraordinary technological wonders into their headquarters, vehicles, and homes, as well. These inventions tend to be more elaborate and versatile than the Super-Scientist's field gear. Such magnificent mechanical marvels as Four Freedoms Plaza, Pier 4, and Castle Doom are prime examples of the kind of technology that Super-Scientists can pump out when designing their base of operations. Also worth mentioning are vehicles and super inventions. Between Doom and Richards, there have been weapons, vehicles, and devices capable of time travel, dimensional travel, and even changing the nature of matter.

Super-Scientists are often viewed as slightly disturbed, a touch mad, or even completely off their rockers. Of course there is a certain amount of distance to be expected when one spends most of his time thinking three steps ahead. However, this eccentricity isn't necessarily a sign of insanity; they merely have a different way of looking at things. However, *genius* shouldn't be confused with *omniscience*. Super-Scientists must be careful that their vast intelligence doesn't become a weakness; genius is the breeding ground of arrogance and overconfidence. Sometimes, individuals can even become so smart they are stupid in their own way. By thinking in such an advanced manner, one can lose touch with the mainstream, and something that would be simple for

a small child to figure out is beyond the grasp of the super-genius.

Still, there is much to be said for genius. The vast majority of advancements in society and technology come from a few gifted individuals. Advancements don't often come from 'normal' people, and when they do, it is often an accidental discovery.

World-Spanner (a.k.a. Cosmic Hero)

Examples: Nova, Quasar, Silver Surfer

Key Powers: Any one or more Energy Control powers at intensity 15+, Flight 10+, Space Flight 5+

Key Skills: Energy Control

Minimum / Recommended Stats:

Attribute	Intensity
Strength	13 / 15+
Agility	6 / 8+
Intellect	7 / 9+
Willpower	8 / 11+
Edge	2+
Minimum Number of Skills	1 (Energy Control)

Rundown:

As their name suggests, World-Spanners can do almost anything, and everything they do is on a big scale. For Spider-Man, an average day is to save a few individuals from a mugging, or maybe defeat Doctor Octopus before his latest scheme inadvertently destroys half of downtown New York. For the X-Men, an average day might be to protect society (which ironically hates and fears them) from other mutants, or maybe prevent Magneto from launching an inter-species war between mutants and humans. The Avengers might spend an average day freeing a country from oppression at the hands of a maniacal dictator or fighting international terrorist groups like A.I.M. Sometimes, it feels like these events are really world-spanning. But for a World-Spanner, an average day is saving a planet from being devoured by Galactus, or saving the solar system from the ravages of the space god Thanos, or saving the entire universe from the wrath of the Dark Phoenix. These events truly do span worlds, galaxies, and universes all across the cosmos.

Now, I know what you are all thinking. With all those scores sailing off the charts, everything has to be peaches and cream for a World-Spanner, right? Wrong! Your hero may be bigger-than-life, but everything he faces will be bigger than he is. A world-spanner could single-handedly wipe out crime in a city in a single day. But he's too busy fighting alien races, space monsters, giant death-machines, and other cosmic entities of a less-than-heroic bent to worry about bank robberies and random acts of violence. A World-Spanner literally carries the weight of the worlds on his shoulders. World-Spanners have immense power: the power to destroy, the power to create, and sometimes the power to do both without meaning to. This can lead a lot of world-spanning heroes to be sullen, brooding, and sulky, but that's only fair. If Spider-Man 'has a bad day at the office,' it means some poor schmuck is out forty or fifty bucks. If the Silver Surfer screws up, it's Game Over for everyone, everywhere, for all time. That sort of pressure entitles him to a bit of a pout every now and then. But don't let your hero mope too

much, or the next time Galactus comes knocking, no one will be there to answer the call.