

Hero Creation FAQ

The purpose of this document is to explain the reasoning behind certain principles of hero creation and to give some more general theory on that subject. Please note (and I mention this often) that the answers to questions – particularly rules questions – vary greatly from Narrator to Narrator. These questions and answers are simply *my own opinions*. Let me also apologize in advance for the lengthy nature of most of my responses. Interpreting the rules of any RPG can be a difficult and confusing affair, so I try to be as thorough as possible. Sometimes this can make my answers annoyingly long. Please note also that questions concerning ‘points’ or ‘hero points’ use an optional house rule, not the card-based official rules.

Q: *Should I always use my hero points in the most efficient way possible?*

A: Despite what common sense might tell you; No! Sometimes it’s better to buy a ‘lesser’ power than a more point-efficient power that works even better. This is purely for the sake of more enjoyable gameplay.

For example: Invulnerability to Kinetics would give your hero absolute invulnerability to kinetics (including physical attacks) for only 10 points. Resistance +10 to Kinetics costs 11 points and doesn’t provide nearly as much protection. In game terms, that means Invulnerability would negate any and all damage from Kinetic attacks, while Resistance +10 negates only the first 10 points of Kinetic damage (other defenses are then resolved normally). However, if you didn’t plan on your hero being completely invulnerable to physical attack - merely highly resistant - then the Resistance would be the better buy for your character.

Q1: *Do similar defenses stack?* **Q2:** *If not, why would anyone buy them?*

A1: The answer to that question depends on the Narrator running your campaign. Some Narrators rule that all resistances stack. Some rule that no resistances stack and only the highest resistance counts towards the defensive score. Some narrators rule that only ‘unlike’ resistances stack, or only ‘like’ resistances stack. (*Note: Generally, I rule that ‘unlike’ resistances always stack and ‘like’ resistances do not stack.*) The next two paragraphs explain that concept, and the following paragraphs answer the second question.

‘Like’ resistances would be where both resistances have the same name. Let’s say you have Resistance to Radiation, but it comes from two different sources, such as the Resistance power and the stunt of the Radiation Control power. If they do not stack, you would simply use the higher of the two resistances for defense. So a character with Resistance +4 to Radiation and Radiation Control 16 (Stunt: Resistance) would have a resistance of +16 vs. Radiation attacks. If they do stack, you simply add the powers together; so that same character would have Resistance +20 to Radiation if your narrator allows ‘stacking.’

‘Unlike’ resistances would be where two powers have a different name, but defend against the same type of attack. For example, Body Armor +4 and Resistance to Kinetics +4 would give a person a +8 Defense Bonus vs. Physical and Kinetic attacks if the Narrator allows stacking. If your Narrator does not allow stacking, that same character would merely have a +4 Defense Bonus. Another example of ‘Unlike Resistances’ would

be Resistance to Mental Control and Psi-Screen. *Note: Some Narrators rule that a power with the same name, but coming from two truly different sources (such as a Power and Equipment or two powers with different trump suits) are still 'unlike' resistances.*

A2: A character might have more than one applicable resistance for a variety of possible reasons. Whether these are good reasons or not is a matter of opinion. A player might want to have a character that is more resistant to energy attacks than physical attacks. If so, it would be necessary to split up the resistances between two powers, either by having two copies of Resistance at differing intensities, or by buying Body Armor (which defends against both physical and energy attacks) and an additional Resistance to Energy (which defends against Energy attacks only).

Alternately, the player might be using an old Hero Sheet from a Narrator who interpreted the rules differently, making parts of that sheet obsolete. It might be possible that some resistances would work on some occasions, but not on others. For example; some Narrators would rule that a hero who has Psi-Screen +10 and Resistance to Mental Control +10 would have a resistance of +20 to reduce *damage* from mental attacks, but only the Psi-Screen +10 would work vs. attempts to *dominate* that hero.

Another possibility is that the hero wants to double up against Nullification. Nullification can sometimes target only a single power, so if your resistance gets wiped, you still have your power stunt to fall back on, or inversely, if your main power gets zapped, you still have the Resistance to protect you. It may also be possible that for 'blanket' effects that try to nullify *all* powers, the Nullification knocks out the lesser resistance, but not the greater resistance. In cases such as this, 'doubling up' on resistances would be handy in that situation, even if useless 90% of the time. This concept of doubling up against Nullification works for all powers and stunts, not just resistances.

Q: *Why do some people have Magic at intensity 10+ (which lets you duplicate any Intellect or Willpower power) and then an Intellect or Willpower power at a lesser intensity? Wouldn't it be better to just use Magic?*

A: There are a few different reasons why this would be a good idea to 'double up' on a power. First, and most importantly, is to clear up the misconception that Magic gives you all Intellect and Willpower powers at Magic's intensity: it doesn't. It allows you to duplicate the *base power*, but not *stunts* of that power. There are also some powers that you cannot duplicate (such as Ability Boost) because they affect skills or abilities; spells can't do that! So you magician could erect a personal force field, but could not perform the neat tricks (Entrapment, Expanded Field, Force Bolt, etc.) that someone with the Force Field power could do. Magic is already sounding less powerful, isn't it? Well, it gets worse.

There's also the second bad part of Magic. Magic is always considered to act as if it has the 'spell-focused' limit, which makes the effects of all Magic actions *contingent*. That may not sound too limiting, but what this means is that your opponent's action gets resolved (including damage dealing) before your spell takes effect. In other words, if you cast a spell to raise a force field, your opponent has a chance to get one shot off before the spell concludes and raises the force field. Just one shot, but it might be enough to swing the balance (if not put you down outright).

The third thing you should keep in mind is that Magic is limited by Willpower; you cannot have a Magic intensity higher than your Willpower score. In order to raise your Magic intensity by 1 point, you must first make sure that your Willpower is high enough, if not, you must first raise your Willpower before you can increase your Magic intensity. With a normal power, you don't have to worry about Willpower, so you can just spend your response bonus on increasing the power's intensity. In other words, if your Magic score is as high as your Willpower, you will need to use 2 response bonuses to raise the Magic up by 1 point (because you have to spend one on Willpower before you can raise Magic).

With those limits in mind, Mages may sometimes wish to have the power on its own, allowing them to resolve actions at normal speed, learn power stunts, and increase the power intensity more quickly. Sometimes that makes it worth the trade-off of the lower intensity to start off with. For more info on the limits of Magic, see the Game FAQ.