



Bullet Points

Gadgets Goodness

By Owen K. C. Stephens

This time out we look at gadgets, those technological add-ons first introduced in *d20 Future*. Gadgets are a great way to represent both customized gear and minor variations between similar items. If two pistols are very similar but one is more accurate than the other, you can give it the extended range gadget and know not only how to figure its new range but exactly how much more it should cost.

Keep in mind three general rules that answer three-quarters of the questions I get about gadgets.

1. You can't apply the same gadget to an item more than once unless the gadget specifically says otherwise.
2. There is no limit to how many gadgets you can place on one piece of equipment, provided none of them contradict one another.
3. A GM can disallow any gadget he doesn't want in his campaign or that he doesn't want available from a specific city, nation, dimension, or craftsman.

Like any technology, gadgets are tools to help a GM create the kind of world he wants to set adventures in, not as straitjackets of immutable rules that players can use to bypass plots, overcome campaign concepts, or buy their way to unreasonable levels of power.

I've broken down the questions by what book the gadget in question came from to make it easier to look up the items mentioned. All the following gadgets are in *d20 Future*, with other gadgets to be covered in the next installment.



Do you really need to buy the alternate weapon gadget to put a bayonet on a rifle? Isn't a +4 purchase DC modifier a bit steep for such a simple piece of common equipment?

You absolutely don't have to add this gadget for firearms that already come with bayonet attachments. If it's standard equipment for a given rifle, its cost is part of the normal purchase DC. If, however, you want to add a bayonet to a shotgun or grenade launcher and have it be well-balanced enough to not impose a penalty when used in melee and doesn't get in the way when you use or load the weapon, a +4 increase to the purchase DC seems like a bargain!




Can you really make an autofire crossbow, flamethrower, or Colt Python with the autofire gadget? Isn't that a stupid idea?

Are you kidding? An autofire crossbow? How cool is that?!


Sadly, it doesn't do you any good to make any of those weapons autofire. Autofire requires ten bullets to use, and none of those weapons holds ten bullets. Heck, the crossbow and flamethrower don't have any bullets, but we don't want to press that point too strongly, because it would mean autofire laser rifles wouldn't work either, and that clearly isn't the intention of the rules. With 'magazines' of one and six respectively, crossbows and revolvers don't qualify for autofire attacks.

The flamethrower might qualify, and it'd be impressive as heck, but it doesn't do you much good. The flamethrower is already an area weapon. By a strict reading of the rules, an autofire flamethrower would give targets two saving throws -- one because it's autofire and one because it's a flamethrower. That's a waste of fuel.

In my own games, if someone wanted to pay for autofire, autoloader module, and expanded magazine gadgets to build a cool-as-heck autofire crossbow, I'd allow it (with maybe 20 bolts rather than the two the rules allow). That would be bending the rules, so it falls entirely in the purview of the GM.

 **How would a collapsible sword work?**

Just as the rules state it does. Haven't you seen *Highlander*?


 **I want to see if I understand how variable charge works. If I have a laser rifle with the variable charge gadget, and I prime it for three rounds, the next attack deals +3 dice (total of 6d8). If I prime it for four rounds, it blows up and hurts me.**

If so, doesn't that mean I can always prime a weapon for three rounds, then wander around with it for a few hours, and my first attack with it when a fight breaks out still deals +3 dice of damage? What's the drawback to priming a weapon? Even if it takes longer, it's free damage, isn't it?

Your example of priming a weapon for three rounds and firing it on the fourth is correct. You end up dealing +3 dice on your first attack in the fourth round.

A weapon can only be primed for three rounds without exploding. Once you prime a weapon, you must fire it before your three rounds are up. You can't wander around with a weapon holding a +3 dice primed charge. The GM may allow you to 'de-prime' a weapon rather than fire it, but this needs to happen before the 45th round. This is why rules are given for priming the weapon in rounds rather than just stating that you can't prime it more than three times before firing it.

While it's not explicitly stated, priming a weapon uses another charge from it. If you prime your laser rifle twice, you use two of its 50 charges, and then a third when you fire it.

 **What does the integrated weapon gadget mean when it states that a weapon can be used "at any time?" You can't use integrated weapons when it's not your turn, can you? It's not just a matter of having it mounted on your armor, because you can design it so the weapon can be taken off. In other words, when could you use a weapon because it is integrated, but not if it isn't?**

You can attack with integrated weapons only when it's your turn, taking an attack action or full round action as appropriate. An integrated weapon, however, doesn't need to be held, drawn, or readied before being used. If you have an OICW assault rifle integrated into your Land Warrior armor, you can fire it without drawing it even if both your hands are full. Further, since you don't need to draw it, you could fire it when you were grappled (as if it were a light weapon).

Note that even if you have an integrated melee weapon, you can't attack someone not in your grapple, because you don't threaten any spaces. If you're pinned, even an integrated weapon isn't an option.

 **Why doesn't a video scope give you a bonus to attack rolls?**

It does. You need a HUD with the "HUD sensor, targeting" gadget to go with it.

 **Why does a chameleonic surface work better for heavier armors? Some light armors cover the whole body, and how can you get better than that?**

Heavier armors have the room for better cameras, processors, and displays, making for more responsive (and thus more effective) chameleon effects. Even light armor that covers the whole body doesn't do so with materials thick enough to make the whole surface both camera and display.

 **Why is there a sound suppressor weapon gadget when there's already a sound suppressor equipment gadget with no restrictions?**

Equipment gadgets always apply only to equipment, not weapons or armor (though GMs may make specific exceptions). The equipment gadget is designed to suppress the sound from things such as drills and sensors. The reference to a weapon is a cut-and-paste error.



What's the range and limitations of a teleporting magazine?

The answer to this is going to depend on the GM's opinion of what makes sense in his campaign. As a place to start, look at the section of *d20 Future* on teleportation, and choose a technology to mimic.



Why is a neg-grav booster usable only in armor? Shouldn't there be a non-armored version for people who just want to jump better?

There are concerns of weight, durability, and proper harness attachment for anything that partially negates gravity and is designed to stay with you as you take vast jumps. Anything that does this well is heavy and confining enough to at least qualify as a leather jacket (which, after all, weighs only 4 lbs, has no armor check penalty, and allows a +8 Dex bonus to defense). Of course, the item may well be sold as a 'grav-boot set' and consist of knee-high boots and matching elbow-length gloves, but it uses the same game statistics.

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About the Author

Owen Kirker Clifford Stephens was born in 1970 in Norman, Oklahoma. He attended the TSR Writer's Workshop held at the Wizards of the Coast Game Center in 1997 and moved to the Seattle area in 2000, after accepting a job as a game designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Fourteen months later, he returned to Oklahoma with his wife and three cats to pick up his freelancer writer/developer career. He has author and co-author credits on numerous **Star Wars** and *Everquest* projects, as well as *Bastards and Bloodlines* from Green Ronin. He also has producer credits for various IDA products, including the Stand-Ins printable figures.

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