Marvel Universe Roleplaying Game Clarifications and House Rules

Compiled by Cwylric (a.k.a. D. Jon Mattson) • June 20, 2003 Version

Much of the information, given herein, was drawn from conversations on the MURPG and MURPG List forums. Most rules clarifications come from Evan Jones, of Q.E.D. Games, Inc., who is one of the game's designers. I paraphrased and cleaned up many of his responses, so please be aware that any problems you may have with them may be as much my fault as his (if not more so). Feel free to give him the credit and me the blame. On the other hand, most changes to the core rules were concocted by me, while acting as GM for my own group of players. For those, I can take the credit, as well as the blame. ☺

For the sake of brevity, the following abbreviations will be used in this article: D = Difficulty; R = Resistance; AN = Action Number; DRC = Difficulty and Resistance Chart (page 80 of the core book).

Altering and Aborting Actions

In the basic system, stones placed in an Action are "locked" into it, even if that Action later becomes impractical or even impossible. This can create some rather illogical consequences, due to the linear nature of the Panel turn sequence. For this reason, the following changes are suggested.

- If a character wishes to abort an Action completely and do nothing in its place, he regains one-half of the red stones he placed in that Action, rounded down.

- If a character wishes to use an Action, as planned, but change the way it is being used (for example, to switch to a different target for an attack), then he may do so; however, a –1 Situational Modifier applies to that Action.

- A character can never change an Action into a totally different Action. If he no longer wishes to use that Action as planned, when his Panel comes up, then he can only change its focus or abort it completely, as described above.

Note that none of this applies to stones placed into defense (which is not, technically, an Action, anyway). These are always "locked in" for the entire Page and cannot be redistributed or regained simply because no one chooses to attack you, since they represent an on-going effort to avoid being hit.

Creation Costs for Established Characters Listed in MURPG

Character	Cost	Character	Cost	Character	Cost
Loki	188w	Thing	85w 2r	Doctor Octopus	46w 2r
Silver Surfer	184w	Rogue	79w	Storm	45w 2r
Doctor Strange	175w(+)	Wolverine	74w	Elektra	45w 1r
Iron Man	165w 1r	Jean Grey	69w 2r	Toad	44w 1r
Mr. Fantastic	125w 2r	Captain America	66w 2r	Blob	43w 1r
Hulk	119w 1r	Spider-Man	64w 1r(?)	Mystique	42w 1r
Ultron	117w	Abomination	61w 1r	Punisher	42w
Magneto	114w 2r	Gambit	57w 2r	Bullseye	39w
Thor	108w(+)	Beast	54w	Black Cat	38w 2r
Baron Mordo	104w	Daredevil	53w 1r	Quicksilver	38w 2r
Yellowjacket	94w 1r	Sabretooth	53w	Venom	38w 2r(?)
Doctor Doom	90w	Kingpin	52w	Invisible Woman	36w
Green Goblin	88w 2r	Human Torch	51w 1r	Scarlet Witch	33w 1r
Kang	86w(+)	Wasp	49w	Cyclops	32w

This has a couple of House Rules built in and assumes that:
- Toad has a Strength of 3 and Leaping +4 (see below). As written in the book, his cost would be 43w 1r.
- Cyclops now possesses Mental Defense +2 (instead of +1), Rapid Recovery, and Targeting +3. As written in the book, his cost would be 24w 2r.

See the full *MURPG Character Costs* article for other notes.

Drain Energy

As interpreted by Evan:
Normal Drain Energy (without range) is treated just like a Close Combat attack, although, of course, the stones that you can put into it are limited by your Drain Energy AN. The only real difference is that red stones of "damage" suck off Energy on a 1-for-1 basis, instead of being converted into white stones of Health loss. Most defenses, such as Reflexive Dodge, work against it; however, Toughness and Physical Invulnerability do *not*. If you are already touching someone, then there is no real defense against this power, and the stones put into it come straight off the victim's Energy. You can, for example, grab someone using Close Combat, then use Drain Energy on him as a second Action.

Drain Energy (continued):

On the other hand, the ranged version of Drain Energy automatically hits, as long as your target is in sight. Unless you have a specific defense, such as Magical Defense (if and only if it is a magical Drain, of course), then there is no possible resistance. If you are bad at Close Combat, then you should probably get the power at a range or get used to making a lot of sneak attacks.

My additions/changes:
I do not have much of a problem with the non-ranged version. It could be argued that the benefits of defenses such as Reflexive Dodge should be negated once a touch is scored (that is, the stones would count to see if you hit, but then be removed if you do). It could also be argued that Toughness should operate at some sort of reduced level. This is probably being too nitpicky, however, and would complicate things unnecessarily. Besides, all such defenses go out the window once you grapple your foe, anyway (which is how the smart drainers do it in the comics).

Unfortunately, I have a *serious* problem with the idea that the ranged version *automatically* hits, ignoring all defenses, cover, and such, as long as you can see your foe. Talk about the gaze of doom! This is simply too powerful for a +2 Advantage (which really just covers the range element). No sane person would take this power without it, as written.

Putting all of this together, the following house rules are in effect. Non-ranged Drain Energy is unchanged (see above). Ranged Drain Energy works exactly like normal Drain Energy, except that it has a range of at least 2. It is to normal Drain Energy as Ranged Combat is to Close Combat. This is a +1 Advantage for a Range of 2 or a +2 Advantage for a Range of 4 (after that, the cost is +1 per extra range number, as usual). If you want to automatically hit your opponent and ignore his defenses, simply by looking at him, then that is going to cost you. This is an additional +3 Advantage, which can be added to either version. In Close Combat, it simulates a draining aura with a "range" of only a few inches – just enough to automatically hit people who are trying to punch you. In Ranged Combat… well, it really is the gaze of doom, but it will cost AN + 5 or more.

Yes, this is very expensive. But, for a cost of 30 stones, you can buy Drain Energy 9, Hits Automatically, allowing you to instantly and completely wipe out the power supply of half the characters in the game (Durability 3 is *very* common) and cripple the rest. No character will be able to defend against it, and you will not even need to touch your foe. In fact, using two actions, you can do this to *two* characters per turn, since it won't cost you anything, over the long run (you get the Energy stones you put into it back). Add 5 more stones, and you can do it at a range, simply by looking at your poor victims. In a game that is so heavily dependent on Energy, what more do you need?

One other small related change: Omega Red does *not* have the ranged version of Drain Energy. With his tentacles, he does not need it. Nor does he appear to have the "auto hit" version, since he generally grabs people with his tentacles first.

Energy Absorption/Reflection

As interpreted by Evan:
This power allows you to absorb a maximum number of red damage stones each Panel equal to twice your AN (from any number of sources). These stones go into your normal Energy Reserve and can cause it to exceed its normal maximum, although stones beyond this limit are lost at a rate of 1 per Panel (during each of *your* Panels, that is – not during everyone else's). In no event can this power increase your Energy Reserve beyond a maximum equal to its normal limit plus twice the power's AN, i.e. 15, if your normal Reserve is 9 and your AN is 3. After that, you must either reflect additional energy back, *immediately* (during your very next Panel), or lose it. Naturally, this does not increase the number of Actions you are normally allowed per Panel, so immediate Reflection may not always be an option, depending on your other activities. As noted in the book, you can give up Energy stones from your Reserve to ignore stones of energy damage, on a 1-for-1 basis. This grants you a very potent defense against such attacks, even once your per-Panel limit has been reached. (Sidenote: For the sake of clarity, this feature will be called Negation throughout the rest of this document.)

When absorbing an attack that has a x2 or x3 damage multiple, that multiple only applies to any stones that get around your Absorption and actually harm you or require Negation. If you reflect such an attack *immediately* (during your very next Panel), rather than storing it, then you can also reflect the damage multiple. For example, if you have Energy Absorption 6 and get hit by a Force Blast for 6 stones with a x2 damage multiple, you could either place 6 stones in your Energy Reserve or reflect back 6 stones, which would have a x2 damage multiple on the target they hit. Note that Reflection is just that: the ability to *reflect* energy. You cannot use your own Reserve to fire Force Blasts *before* absorbing energy from another source; you can only reflect attacks that have hit you, and you must do so immediately after being hit.

Full Example: Vortex has a Durability of 3 and an Energy Absorption AN of 4. Her Energy Reserve is currently full and, thus, is sitting at 9. She gets clobbered by The Blaster, for 11 red stones of damage, with a x2 damage multiple. She absorbs 8 stones, since this is her per-Panel limit. The 3 remaining stones get through and cause x2 damage, for a total of 6 stones. If Vortex wishes, she can use up 6 of the 8 stones she just absorbed to negate that damage completely. She could even Reflect back the initial 8 stones, *immediately*, rather than absorbing them, causing an attack with a x2 damage multiple. Of course, this would force her to use up her own Reserves for Negation purposes, if she does not wish to suffer damage from the 6 stones that got through. If Vortex does choose to absorb the 8 stones, rather than reflecting them, her Energy Reserve will be sitting at its absolute upper limit (9 + 2 x 4 = 17), and she will "bleed off" 1 stone per Panel, thereafter.

My additions/changes:

This Action is somewhat too powerful for its cost, as described, since it completely trumps the attacks of many characters and is vastly better than any similar defense on a stone-for-stone basis. I have discussed this at great length on the forums, so I will not repeat my arguments here. Suffice to say that this Action has been altered with the following house rules:

The 2 x AN Absorption limit is per *Page*, not per Panel. This allows a large number of energy-wielders to "over-load" the absorber by firing at him all at once (otherwise, he would tend to simply absorb each of their attacks during each Panel, and this sort of cooperation would be impossible). The Reflection and Negation elements of this Action have been removed and changed into Options, allowing the creation of a broader variety of characters. By default, Absorption simply allows you to absorb stones of damage and place them in your Energy Reserve. For this reason, the basic cost has actually been reduced: Cost Level = AN + 3. Adding the ability to fire bolts of reflected energy (i.e. Reflection) is a +1 Advantage, and it also includes the ability to mimic damage multiples. Adding the ability to negate damage in excess of your Absorption limit by spending Energy stones on a 1-for-1 basis (i.e. Negation) is a +2 Advantage, since it adds a very potent defense that is in operation at all times. Thus, if both options are taken (as in the book's version), Cost Level = AN + 6.

Energy Shortage Problems

As stands, there is no way to improve your Energy Reserve or regeneration of red stones without improving your Durability or, in the latter case, taking one of the versions of Healing Factor (which will not be appropriate for many characters). Two Modifiers have been added to rectify this problem. Note that the second one is based on an improvement Evan suggested specifically for Cyclops.

A character can also improve his regeneration of red Energy stones by taking a full Panel to catch his breath. He cannot perform *any* Action or use red stones in *any* way – not even stones from the General Pool for Reflexive Dodge and the like. If he does this for an entire Panel, then his red stone regeneration rate at the start of the next Panel (only) is *doubled*. (Thanks to I3ullseye for this idea.)

Energy Battery

(Cost = Modifier Number x Durability Number red stones)

Description

This simply adds 3 red stones to your normal Energy Reserve for each point in the Modifier. In effect, your normal Energy Reserve is now 3 x Durability + 3 x Power Battery Modifier, in *all* respects (including the determination of your storage limits with powers such as Drain Energy and Energy Absorption). This Modifier has no effect on your Health or on your regeneration rate for white or red stones.

Comments

This is the perfect way to simulate those characters who seem to have a lot of energy without being particularly buff and is especially useful for characters who focus on Actions, rather than Modifiers. Note that the unusual Cost calculation serves a purpose: it ensures that the number of stones you pay is always fair, based on your Durability, as well as your Modifier. For moderate scores, this is about one-third of what you would pay to gain a similar amount of Energy by simply adding to your Durability, on the *average*. For very high scores, it becomes slightly more cost effective, but it is useful at any level (and often easier to rationalize than a Durability increase).

Rules for Modifier Box

- Add +3 red stones to Energy Reserve per Modifier Number.

Example

Dynamo has a Durability of 4 and Power Battery +3. His normal Energy Reserve is 21 (3 x 4 + 3 x 3) – nearly double what it would be without this Modifier (although he had to pay 12 red stones – or 4 white stones – for this privilege). Had he simply raised his Durability by +3, to 7, he would have the same Reserve and other benefits, as well; however, this would have cost him 12 extra white stones, instead of only 4.

Rapid Recovery

(Cost Level = Durability Number)

Description

You have the ability to recover from fatigue with unusual speed. Regenerate 3 red stones per Panel for every 2 white stones of Health you have. This Modifier requires no Number.

Comments

This is really just Healing Factor with a –2 Disadvantage, "only regenerates red stones". It is appropriate for characters who have some means of rapidly recovering energy (absorbing it from the environment, for example) but no special healing capabilities. Do not round fractions up or down; instead, alternate the number of stones recovered between the two closest whole numbers (see the Example).

Rules for Modifier Box

- Regenerate 3 red stones per 2 white stones per Panel.

Example

Cyclops has a Durability of 3 and, assuming that he is at full health, would normally regenerate 3 red stones per Panel; however, he improves this by buying Rapid Recovery for 1 white stone. His normal regeneration rate for red stones now alternates between 4 and 5 (4 on odd numbered Panels, 5 on even numbered ones).

Entangle and Spider-Man's Web Shooters

As interpreted by Evan:

A web shooter entangles its target with whatever "damage" it would normally cause. Toughness does not defend against this attack, but Reflexive Dodge does. The "damage" stones that get through are treated as the Difficulty and Resistance that apply to any attempt to break free before the webbing dissolves (generally using Strength or an appropriate attack form, but possibly using Agility or Speed, depending on the victim and the situation). Once Spider-Man has a target webbed, he can pile on more webbing during the next Panel, of course. Spider-Man uses Ranged Combat (4) for this attack and gets to add in the Modifier for his web shooter (+6, granting 6 free stones), for a total of 10 stones of webbing per Panel, maximum.

My additions/changes:

No matter how much the webbing is piled on, the Difficulty cannot exceed one-half of the maximum number of stones that could get through, undefended (5, in Spider-Man's case). Each successful attack, after the first, adds +1 to the Difficulty, until that limit is reached. On the other hand, the Resistance can be increased indefinitely by layering the webbing over consecutive Panels. The stones just keep adding up. This leads, naturally, to a general Entangle Action:

Entangle

(Cost Level = Action Number + 1)

Description

This power allows you to bind an opponent with a physical substance that hinders his mobility and physical (but not purely mental) Actions. It comes with a Range of 2, which can be improved with an Advantage, as usual. Entangle is treated as a Ranged Combat attack, although the stones that may be placed in it are limited by your Entangle AN. Toughness does not provide any defense against this attack, but Reflexive Dodge does, as do defenses that block attacks from coming into contact with the victim (such as an active Force Field). The red stones that get through defenses should be noted, as they represent both the Resistance and, to a lesser degree, the Difficulty of any attempts to break the Entangle. The Difficulty cannot exceed one-half of the power's AN, rounded down, which means that a particularly successful hit might only improve the Resistance. You may attack a target with this Action repeatedly, over several Panels, to "layer" the binding. Each successful attack that strikes for at least 1 red stone adds +1 to the Difficulty, until the limit of one-half AN is reached, but *all* red stones that get through defenses are added to the Resistance, without limit. In this manner, the Resistance can be increased far beyond the power's AN, making it more time-consuming for the victim to escape (although no more impossible). To break out, the victim must use an Action and put stones into Strength or an appropriate damaging attack. Agility or Speed may be used, instead, at the GM's discretion, depending on the victim and the situation. The value of the Ability or Action used must be great enough to match or exceed the Difficulty, and the stones count against the Resistance, removing it completely or wearing it down over several Panels, as usual. The victim may be assisted by other people, who can attempt to damage the binding, as well; however, if an ally uses any type of ranged Action to do this, then the victim is automatically struck by the attack, as well. He takes one-half of any damage caused (rounded down), while the binding takes full damage. If a victim cannot escape, then the binding dissolves on its own after an appropriate interval, determined by the GM (usually, about one hour).

Options

- +1 to Cost Level if you can cause your own Entangle to dissolve instantly, at will, no matter where you are.
- +1 to Cost Level if the Entangle also completely shuts down the victim's senses, covering his eyes, plugging his ears, and so forth.
- +1 to Cost Level if the Entangle is "sticky". Anyone else who comes into physical contact with the victim becomes Entangled, as well, with the same Difficulty and the current Resistance (reduced by any damage suffered by the binding, thus far).
- +1 to Cost Level to create barriers made out of the binding substance, which Entangle anyone foolish enough to try to cross them. Such a wall cannot stand on its own but must be attached to two or more opposite surfaces (across a door frame, between two buildings, from floor to ceiling in a room, etc.). Attacks that pass through the barrier reduce its Resistance by the number of red stones used; however, these red stones "absorbed" by the barrier do not harm anyone on the other side. Thus, only an attack that has more red stones than the Resistance gets through at all, with whatever stones remain (destroying the barrier, in the process).
- You may buy Web-Slinging at a discount of –1 to Cost Level, as long as it can logically be combined with your form of Entangle.

Comments

This is an excellent way to disable opponents without causing serious harm. Beware of targets with massive Strength scores, however, as they may rip through your binding in a single Panel. The Area Effect Advantage works very nicely with this power and is a logical addition.

Rules for Action Box
- Range: 2
- Split stones for multiple attacks
- Red stones that get through defense act as Difficulty and Resistance for escape attempts
- Binding can be "layered", adding +1 to the Difficulty and red stones to Resistance
- Difficulty cannot exceed one-half Action Number, rounded down

Example

Silk has Entangle with an AN of 9. In combat with two thugs, she announces that she is firing at both of them, splitting 9 stones between them (6 on the big one, and 3 on the other). The big one has only 1 stone in defense, so he gets hit for 5 red stones. When he tries to escape, his Difficulty will be 4 (since it cannot exceed one-half of 9, rounded down) and his Resistance will be 5. The other thug had no stones in defense, so he gets hit for 3 red stones. When he tries to escape, his Difficulty and Resistance will both be 3. The GM knows that his Strength is only 2 and that he has no attacks that would be more effective in damaging the Entangle, so that thug is out for the count, unless the situation changes. On the other hand, the big thug is actually a mutant, with a Strength of 5, so he can try to free himself. If he puts at least 5 stones into damaging the Entangle, he will destroy it. Anything less will only damage it, reducing its Resistance during later Panels.

Force Field as Part of a Mastery

The MURPG *Guide to the X-Men* lists a number of new Mastery Options, on page 49, including a Force Field. While the description seems to imply that this Force Field operates at *full* power (based on your Mastery AN) as long as you have at least one stone in your Mastery, for *any* purpose, this is clearly too powerful for the Cost Level Modifier of +2. Indeed, this makes the Option a good deal more powerful than the real Force Field Action, which has a Cost Level of AN + 3. Evan agreed that this is a problem and suggested the following fix; however, he also hinted that, since it contradicts the Guide, it cannot be considered an "official" change, at this point. He indicated that either it or something like it will probably appear in a future errata. Either way, I like the change just the way he described it, and it has been incorporated as a House Rule.

As interpreted by Evan:

A Mastery Force Field works just like any other Force Field. It is very much as if you had the two powers and combined them into one Action box (which you could do, instead of buying it as an Option, initially or by adding it with Lines). Your Mastery just uses stones like any other Action. If you put them into defense, then they defend; otherwise, they do not. If you have the Force Field Option and devote 3 stones of your Mastery to defense, then you get 3 extra stones from the General Pool, for a total defense of 6 (just like a regular Force Field). If you put in zero, you have no (general) defense whether or not your Mastery has the Force Field Option. Note that an immunity to your Mastered element is a separate issue and does not apply to defense, as such.

This illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of combining Action boxes. In a nutshell, the advantages of combining Action boxes are that: a) the Action becomes better (more versatile); b) all aspects of the combined Action improve with Lines; and c) you save on an Action Box (remember the limit of nine). The disadvantage is that you can no longer use the Actions separately – using more stones between the two boxes and possibly combining their effects, for example.

Leaping

As interpreted by Evan:

When a character leaps, he uses the Area/Leaping section of the DRC, figuring the Difficulty as usual and doubling it to get the Resistance. For example, a leap of 20 feet would have a D of 3 and a R of 6. The Resistance must be overcome all at once, in a single Panel, so a character who cannot provide enough Energy will fall short. Leaping normally requires either Strength or Acrobatics, although Speed might be allowed in specific circumstances, e.g. if the character has enough clear space to dash forward and make a running jump.

My additions/changes:

A new Modifier, called Leaping, has been added to extend these rules and is described, below. It is assumed that Toad possesses this Modifier at +4; however, his Strength has been reduced to 3 to more accurately reflect the fact that it is focused in his lower body (which is covered by Leaping).

Leaping

(Cost Level = Modifier Number)

Description

This power allows you to overcome Resistance, when leaping, by adding free stones equal to the Modifier Number from the General Pool. One-third of the Modifier, rounded down, can be added to your Strength, Acrobatics, or Speed for purposes of meeting the Difficulty requirements, as well, and as a Situational Modifier when attacking an opponent by jumping down on to him or through him in a "leaping charge". This effectively adds extra stones to your Close Combat with no extra Energy cost, in much the same manner as Claws.

Comments

A good Modifier for those characters who seem to have a little more "bounce" than their Strength and Energy would imply. Nasty when used to drive people into the ground by leaping on them from above.

Rules for Modifier Box

- Apply one-third of Modifier (rounded down) against Difficulty when leaping
- Apply full Modifier stones against Resistance when leaping
- Add one-third of Modifier (rounded down) as a Situational Modifier when making a leaping attack

Example

Toad has a Strength of 3, which would normally allow him to leap up to 25' (D 3), with an Energy cost of 6 stones (R 6). Since he also has Leaping +4, however, he need only pay 2 red stones to make such a jump and, thus, can do so repeatedly with little effort (since he regenerates 4 stones per Panel). Better still, since his Modifier Number grants him a +1 bonus to his effective Strength for purposes of overcoming the Difficulty of a leap, he is capable of extending his jumps to 50' (D 4), with an Energy cost of 8 stones (R 8). Again, the Modifier reduces this cost by 4, so he can even make such "super jumps" repeatedly, as long as he does not spend Energy in any other manner (which would slowly tire him out). Finally, if Toad performs a leaping attack (for example, leaping down on to a foe from above), he automatically gains a +1 stone Situational Modifier for free.

Lifting and Throwing

The Difficulty of lifting a heavy object is based on its Weight, as noted on the DRC. This is also the base Resistance, which must be overcome during *each* Panel; however, as noted on the chart, that Resistance increases by +1 per Panel, in an additive fashion. For example, an object that weighs one ton can be lifted with a Difficulty and Resistance of 4. If one continues to hold it up, the Resistance increases to 5 in the second Panel, 6 in the third Panel, and so forth.

As interpreted by Evan:

When throwing a heavy object at someone, the Difficulty and Resistance are based on the weight of the object, as usual; however, the Resistance is increased by +1 per 10 feet of range. Thus, throwing a park bench (D and R of 2) at a target 30 feet away (R +3) would require a Strength of at least 2 and 5 stones of Energy. The stones that actually apply to the attack are based on the weight of the object, plus any extra stones put into the effort, above and beyond those needed to lift and throw it, with a -2 Situational Modifier. Thus, in the park bench example, placing 9 stones into the effort would result in a 4 stone attack (2 for the weight, +4 for extra effort, -2 for Situational Modifier). Essentially, you are using your Strength, instead of Ranged Combat, which is why you receive the -2 Situational Modifier. Note that a weapon that is too light or too flimsy (Weight 0) never does any meaningful damage, no matter how many stones you put into the effort.

These rules do not apply to Ranged Combat attacks, using aerodynamic weapons that are designed to be thrown. In this case, the attack is simply calculated as usual: Ranged Combat + Weapon Modifier. The Range limit is usually 2, unless there is a very compelling reason for it to be greater. Of course, an unnaturally heavy weapon might require you to spend stones just to lift it.

Note: As near as I can see, these rules seem to replace the throwing information in the Weight box of the DRC. While there still appears to be no limit to the amount of Energy you can use (beyond the obvious limit imposed by the size of your Reserve), the throwing damage is no longer 2 x the Energy used.

My additions/changes:

I have a few problems with this basic system:

1) It seems to me that the scale used in the Weight section of the DRC starts too high, resulting in normal people being unable to throw even small objects (since anything up to 100 pounds has a weight of 1).

2) The increasing energy cost for carrying a heavy object is sensible when you are at the limits of your abilities, but it is absurd when your Strength is vastly greater than the amount needed to lift the object.

3) The range of a throwing attack should affect the Difficulty, as well as the Resistance, on some level. If you are only just strong enough to lift something, it seems unlikely that you will be able to throw it very far, no matter how much Energy you pour in.

4) On the other hand, the range increment of only 10 feet seems too conservative for characters who are much stronger than they need to be to throw a particular object (especially in a comic universe). Then, too, a linear range system seems inappropriate, given that the system used to represent force in the game (for Strength, lifting weights, and so on) is non-linear, roughly doubling with each point.

5) Finally, I have a problem with the idea that the nature of the object in question has little effect on the damage caused. If you examine the system carefully, you will realize that the weight is being removed from the stones (since only those in excess of the minimum required count) and then simply being placed back in again, as a bonus. Thus, no matter what you throw, the damage stones are simply equal to the effort you put in, -1 per 10 feet, -2 for the Situational Modifier. The object, itself, is irrelevant.

With all of this in mind, I have retained the skeleton of the basic system, described above, but altered some of the details. Here is the alternate system, in full. Most of these rules also apply to powers that mimic Strength (in particular, Telekinesis).

Lifting and Throwing (continued):

The Weight section of the DRC should be extended, to the left, to accommodate smaller objects. I would suggest that each reduction of 1 point halve the weight limit, following the pattern that already exists on the chart. Round down to the nearest whole number, and assume that there is a practical minimum of 3 pounds, for this purpose (below this, the object is no longer really "heavy"). This is illustrated below:

Weight	Difficulty	Weight	Difficulty
Up to 3 pounds	-4	26 to 50 pounds	0
4 to 6 pounds	-3	51 to 100 pounds	1
7 to 12 pounds	-2	101+ pounds	Use DRC
13 to 25 pounds	-1		

The Difficulty of lifting a heavy object is based on its Weight, as usual. This is also the base Resistance, for most objects; however, for smaller objects, as noted above, the final Resistance can never be less than 0. The Resistance must be overcome during *each* Panel; however, as explained above, it *may* increase by +1 per Panel, in an additive fashion. This occurs if the Difficulty is equal to the character's Strength score. If it is 1 point less, then the Resistance increases by +1 per 2 Panels (again, in an additive fashion). If it is 2 or more points less, then the Resistance remains constant. It is assumed that the character's "casual Strength" is up to the task of carrying the object for some time.

Example: You wish to lift an object that weighs one ton (Difficulty 4).
- If your Strength is 3 or less, you cannot do so.
- If your Strength is 4, then the Resistance is 4 + 1 per Panel, i.e. 4 on Panel 1, 5 on Panel 2, 6 on Panel 3, 7 on Panel 4, 8 on Panel 5, and so forth.
- If your Strength is 5, then the Resistance is 4 + 1 per 2 Panels, i.e. 4 on Panel 1, 4 on Panel 2, 5 on Panel 3, 5 on Panel 4, 6 on Panel 5, and so forth.
- If your Strength is 6 or more, then the Resistance remains constant (at 4), no matter how long you carry the object.

If you wish to throw an object, as a weapon, the Difficulty is increased by a number based on the range of the target. This number can be found on the chart below, which basically just extends the DRC by adding a "Throwing Range" section. Note that this chart follows the "doubling with each point" pattern that is used for other feats of Strength.

Throwing Range	Difficulty Increase	Throwing Range	Difficulty Increase
To 10 feet	+1	To 1/4 mile	+8
To 20 feet	+2	To 1/2 mile	+9
To 40 feet	+3	To 1 mile	+10
To 80 feet	+4	To 2 miles	+11
To 160 feet	+5	To 4 miles	+12
To 320 feet	+6	To 8 miles	+13
To 640 feet	+7	To 16 miles	+14

Example: Trying to throw a baseball (D -4) 100 feet (D +5) would result in a final Difficulty of 1. Anyone with a normal Strength could do it. Trying to throw a minibus (D 5) the same distance (D +5) would result in a final Difficulty of 10. Obviously, only someone like the Hulk could do this (but, in his enraged state, he could throw it *much* farther).

At the GM's discretion, a character who is simply trying to get as much distance as possible into his throw and takes an entire Panel to put his whole weight into the effort can reduce the effective Difficulty by 1. If the object is used as a weapon, however, an extra -2 Situational Modifier applies to the attack stones (over and above any other penalties), due to the fact that such a throw is terribly inaccurate. An athlete of reasonable Strength may be capable of throwing a baseball over 400 feet, but he is unlikely to win any accuracy competitions while doing so.

Whether you are throwing an object or simply lifting it, the Resistance is always equal to the Difficulty (minimum 0), and it must be met in a single Panel. You may use additional stones, beyond this minimum, to exert extra force and do additional damage when the object is used as a weapon; however, the total stones cannot exceed your relevant Ability score, as usual (Strength, in this case).

The stones caused by an attack involving a thrown object are simply equal to the number of stones placed in effort, with a -2 Situational Modifier for using Strength with an improvised weapon, instead of Ranged Combat with a real weapon. You may add a number of free stones from the General Pool (equivalent to a Weapon Modifier) equal to either one-half of the object's Weight number (rounded down) or its full Hardness number, whichever is *lower*. If the object covers an especially large area or is particularly hard, with many sharp, dangerous parts, the GM may wish to throw in an extra +1 Situational Modifier; however, there will seldom be a need for this. If you look at the comics, the Hulk doesn't throw a minibus to get extra damage. He throws it to give himself a ranged attack, which he is normally lacking. Of course, the reverse is also true: if the object is especially soft or flimsy, the GM may wish to reduce the number of stones by one or more.

Realistically, there is only so much force an object can transmit before it breaks apart and the remaining energy is wasted. Most of the time, it will not be worth worrying about this; however, if a character insists on trying to use flimsy objects as weapons, you may wish to impose the following limitation. The maximum number of red damage stones that a thrown object can cause (after defenses) is equal to 3 x its white Health stones + its Hardness number. Any additional stones are lost.

Example: The Hulk picks up a minibus (D 5) and throws it at Doctor Doom, who is 60 feet in the air (D +4). Since the Difficulty is 9, and the Hulk's Strength is currently sitting at 12 (he is enraged), this is well within his capabilities. He must put at least 9 stones into the effort but can use as many as 12, if he wishes. Naturally, he puts in 12. The total stones that apply to the

attack are 12, i.e. 12 (base) - 2 (Situational Modifier) + 2 (Weight of minibus/2, rounded down, since this is lower than its Hardness). Since a minibus is probably up to dishing out this kind of hurt, Doom will take any stones that get through his defenses as damage (of course, the minibus will also be in rough shape). If, on the other hand, the Hulk had thrown a wooden crate (Health 1, Hardness 1) at his foe, things might have gone differently. The GM would have been well within his rights to rule that it could cause no more than 4 stones of damage, after defenses, no matter how much Energy was put into it. Beyond that amount, the crate would pretty much disintegrate.

Telepathy

Telepathy, as presented on page 59, is, frankly, a bit of a mess. The Option breakdown is not entirely logical, some of the costs seem too low, and, most importantly, many of the rules encourage abuse and/or are vague to the point of being nearly useless. The following ideas clean up this Action a bit and make it much more balanced and usable. There are only a few actual changes (mainly involving Option costs) but a large number of clarifications and fleshed out systems.

The basic power provided by the Telepathy Action (purchased at Cost Level = Action Number) is the ability to touch other minds and read thoughts. Without the Project Thoughts Option, you have no ability to send thoughts, so two-way communication is not possible. As noted in the book, this Action also grants you the Mental Defense Modifier, with a bonus equal to your Action Number, at no cost. If you wish to increase this value, you start paying from this point, not from 0. For example, Telepathy 6 grants Mental Defense +6. If you wish to increase this to +7, you must pay 2 white stones (the difference between the costs of Mental Defense +6 and +7, i.e. 4 white stones and 6 white stones). The actual use of this power is described in much greater detail, below.

Options

- *Control Others:* +2 to Cost Level. This allows you to control the mind of any person you contact, as described in the book and in greater detail, below. You cannot take this Option unless you also take Project Thoughts.

- *Create Links:* +1 to Cost Level. This allows you to maintain contact with a mind you have already touched over *any* distance and even into the astral plane (although initial contact still has a Range of 4 and requires line-of-sight). As usual, you must leave at least one stone in Telepathy at all times to maintain this link. There is no limit to the number of links you can maintain, beyond what your Energy Reserve and Telepathy Action Number will allow. At the GM's discretion, this Option may also allow you to maintain a *free* link with a single person who is very close to you (think Jean and Cyclops). A side-effect of this Option is that you are able to use the target's senses, at will; thus, you can see what he sees, hear what he hears, and so forth. There is a price for this, however: each sense that you "borrow" in this manner replaces your own, so you may be left defenseless and easily surprised.

- *Illusions:* +1 to Cost Level. This allows you to project images into other minds, as described in the book and in greater detail, below. You cannot take this Option unless you also take Project Thoughts. Note that the Control Others Option does *not* grant this one for free, as indicated in the book.

- *Mental Bolts:* +1 to Cost Level. This allows you to make mental attacks, as described in the book and in greater detail, below. It does *not* require the Project Thoughts Option, unless you want to be able to attack through a mental link (again, see below).

- *Mental Fortitude:* +1 to Cost Level. This improves your Mental Defense, as described below.

- *Mental Paralysis:* +1 to Cost Level. This works in exactly the same fashion as Control Others, except that you can only give your victims a single command: "Do not move at all." They cannot perform any physical actions as long as they are under your control, although they *can* perform purely mental ones. You cannot take this Option unless you also take Project Thoughts.

- *Mind Scan:* +1 to Cost Level. This allows you to scan an area to locate a particular mind that you already know. The stones you place in Telepathy determine the area covered (as per the DRC). If the mind in question is in that area, you will sense its direction and approximate distance (within five yards). If you also possess the Create Links Option, you can make contact with that mind (just as if you could see the target), as long as you do so during your next Panel. Once a link has been established, you can use your other telepathic abilities on the target, as usual, ignoring range restrictions.

- *Project Thoughts:* +1 to Cost Level. This allows you to send thoughts, as well as receive them, and is necessary for two-way telepathic communication. It also opens the door to several other useful Options.

- *Repair Minds:* +1 to Cost Level. As described in the book, this acts just like Mutant Healing, except that it only works on mental damage. At the GM's discretion, this Option can also be used to remove phobias, bad habits, and memories or even cure insanity. The Difficulty should be set, as usual, based on the severity of the ailment. The Resistance is typically much higher, possibly requiring several "sessions" to overcome, and it may be doubled or even tripled, if the subject is unwilling. You cannot take this Option unless you also take Project Thoughts.

- *Intelligence Bonus:* +2 to Cost Level, instead of the usual +5.

- You may buy Telekinesis at a discount of -1 to Cost Level.

Telepathic Contact

To enter a target's mind, the stones you place in the Telepathy Action must *exceed* his combined Intelligence + Mental Defense. Note that this basic defense is in effect at all times and requires no stones on the part of the victim. If you wish to enter *undetected*, you must spend 1 additional stone, and this does not count towards your "attack" (which may cause it to fail, in an otherwise even match). In any event, if your telepathic "attack" succeeds, a mental link is formed.

As usual, the total stones you can place in all Telepathy-related Actions is limited by your Telepathy Action Number. Note that Telepathy has a Range of 4 and requires a clear line-of-sight. This limit can be circumvented, after contact has been made, with the Create Links Option.

Maintaining Contact

Maintaining a telepathic link costs 1 stone per person per Panel – or 2 stones, if you wish to remain undetected. During this time, you scan surface thoughts (only), for no additional cost. You can also send thoughts, if you have the Project Thoughts Option, so two-way communication is possible. Scanning deep thoughts and memories requires you to spend stones at least equal to your target's Intelligence (+1, as usual, if you wish to remain undetected). With any telepathic activity, you may wish to spend more stones than the minimum required to maintain contact against a resisting target (see below), especially when using the Control Others Option. Note that maintaining and using a telepathic link does *not* require an Action; however, the stones used *do* count against the per-Panel limit imposed by your Telepathy Action Number.

If the target senses your presence (because you made no attempt to conceal it or are trying to control him), he can attempt to drive you out of his mind. This requires an Action, using stones limited by his Intelligence. Note that Mental Defense does *not* add to this attempt: it is a first line of defense, designed to block intrusion, but it is of little use in driving out intruders once it has failed (but see Mental Fortitude, below). Both the Difficulty and the Resistance of this attempt are equal to the number of stones the Telepath put into the link during her last Panel. Thus, these may vary, from Panel to Panel, as each person in the link struggles to gain dominance. As with any effort, the GM is never obliged to inform the victim of the Resistance he must overcome, although he is free to give appropriate hints, e.g. weak, fair, strong. If the victim beats the Resistance at any point, the link is broken, and the Telepath must start all over again, if she wishes to re-establish it. Furthermore, if the victim manages to resist with stones equal to twice the Resistance (or more), the telepath is stunned during her next Panel. *All* mental links are broken, and she can take no Actions during that time (although she is still alert enough to benefit from Modifier-based defenses, such as Reflexive Dodge).

A telepathic link lasts until: a) the telepath quits maintaining it, b) the target forcibly escapes, as described above, or c) the telepath and the victim become separated by too much distance (Range 4, unless the Create Links Option is possessed).

Mental Bolts

It is not necessary to form a mental link, as described above, to attack someone with a mental bolt (although there can be a substantial advantage in doing so – see below). It is simply treated as a normal attack (Range 4), except that the victim's defense is automatically equal to his Intelligence + Mental Defense (at no cost to him). As noted in the book, any stones that get through can either cause normal damage or stun the victim. A stunned victim can do nothing during his next Panel. During each Panel, thereafter, he *automatically* tries to snap out of it, using stones equal to the *lowest* of: a) his Intelligence score, b) his Energy Reserve, or c) the Resistance (he need never waste stones by exceeding the Resistance). The Difficulty of this attempt is 0, and the Resistance is equal to the number of red stones that got through his defenses. Each attempt wears the Resistance down, as usual, as the victim clears his head. During the Panel in which he finally snaps out of it, he can take a second Action if he has already placed stones in an appropriate manner to do so. Obviously, this is a risky proposition, given that the stones may be wasted, but good for simulating someone trying to focus his thoughts to act coherently and finally managing to do so.

It *is* possible to use mental bolt on someone with whom you have already forged a mental link, as long as you also possess the Project Thoughts Option. This has the obvious advantage that it bypasses Mental Defense and acts only against Intelligence. This is one of the reasons that trained telepaths and others who possess Mental Defense are very careful about who they allow into their minds in the first place. Naturally, this attack will give away your presence.

Mental Illusions

The Mental Illusions Option works very much like any other Telepathy Option. First, the telepath must establish a link, as described above. If she succeeds, then she can implant illusions in her victim's mind immediately (this does not require a separate Action). Alternatively, she can try to delude a victim with whom she has already forged a link. This requires a second "attack" attempt, but it bypasses Mental Defense, since, by that point, the telepath is already in. In any event, illusion lasts only as long as the telepath can maintain the link, as described above. It is possible to remain undetected while planting illusions, but this costs an extra stone (which does not add to the attack), as usual.

Mental illusions are purely in the mind of the victim and cannot be seen by anyone else. For obvious reasons, they do not show up on film and cannot be detected by machines. Because they bypass the victim's senses and work directly on his mind, they are very difficult to ignore. If the victim has no reason to doubt the illusion, he will automatically fall for it. If he does have a reason to doubt it and tries to resist, he may do so, in exactly the same manner as resisting any other mental link (see above).

An illusionary attack cannot cause real damage; however, it can cause enough pain, shock, and confusion to be genuinely debilitating. In game terms, an illusionary attack can be treated exactly like a mental bolt (see above), with its ability to circumvent physical but not mental defenses; however, it can only cause damage (there is no stun option). Furthermore, the "damage" is not real, and, once the victim realizes this, it simply disappears. Should he be "killed" by an illusion, he falls unconscious for two Panels per red stone of "damage" taken. This breaks the telepathic link and, thus, ends the illusion.

Mind Control

The Control Others Option works very much like any other Telepathy Option. First, the telepath must establish a link, as described above. If she succeeds, then she gains control of her victim immediately (this does not require a separate Action). Alternatively, she can try to gain control over a victim with whom she has already forged a link. This requires a second "attack" attempt, but it bypasses Mental Defense, since, by that point, the telepath is already in.

In any event, control only lasts as long as the telepath can maintain the link, as described above. Usually, the victim will be struggling against her, trying to escape. The GM should feel free to add appropriate Situational Modifiers to the escape attempt, if the victim is being ordered to do something self-destructive or against his deepest nature. Having said this, such Modifiers should seldom be greater than +2 (traditionally, in comics, mind controlled characters can be forced to do some pretty terrible things).

Note that it is *never* possible to remain undetected when exercising the Control Others Option, so any stones used for this are wasted. Of course, forming a link, undetected, and then trying to exert control, openly, in a subsequent Panel is a perfectly valid tactic, allowing the telepath to bypass Mental Defense for the control attempt.

Suggestions

A telepath who possesses both the Control Others and Repair Minds Options has the ability to implant suggestions that a subject will act on hours or even days later. She must make telepathic contact, as usual. After that, she can implant suggestions at a rate of one per Action. The number of stones that she places in each suggestion (that is, the number placed in the Telepathy Action during that Panel, beyond the basic number that she has to use just to maintain contact) determines the strength of the suggestion. This acts as the Resistance that will be involved in overcoming the compulsion. Note that it *is* possible to implant suggestions secretly; however, this adds one stone to the maintenance cost, as usual, which does not contribute to the strength of the suggestion. This is an exception to the usual rule that mental control must be overt, due to the special nature of the contact.

The subject makes no attempt to resist the suggestion at the time that it is implanted (his resistance would have been against the initial contact). Instead, he does so when it comes time to act on the suggestion. At this point, the subject can resist with stones limited by his Intelligence, plus free Mental Fortitude stones, if that Modifier is possessed. If he succeeds in defeating the Resistance represented by the strength of the suggestion in one Panel, then he snaps out of it and does not act on the command. If he fails, he performs whatever deed is required of him. If the action in question would take several Panels to perform, then the GM *may* allow the subject to try to resist periodically (once per Panel or per minute or whatever seems appropriate, based on the nature of the action). His attempts would wear down the Resistance as usual. Whether or not the GM allows this should depend on the nature of the deed. If it is something that the subject would be strongly opposed to, then the GM can be more lenient. If it is something that he has no strong feelings about, then the GM should probably only allow one attempt to resist the command.

There is a limit to the number of suggestions that can be implanted in a specific victim by a specific telepath at any one time. The total of all stones placed in these suggestions cannot exceed 2 x Telepathy Action Number. Any stones beyond that number are wasted, resulting in weaker or non-existent suggestions. Of course, a smart telepath will usually add in at least one extra suggestion, on top of everything else he wants the subject to do: "After you have performed this deed, forget that you did so."

Mental Fortitude

As previously noted, Mental Defense is of no use once someone is entrenched in your mind. As a +2 Advantage, however, you can turn normal Mental Defense into Mental Fortitude. It operates in exactly the same manner, except that it *always* adds to your Intelligence when resisting mental effects, even against telepathic attacks focused through an already established link. Furthermore, it provides free stones from the General Pool when you attempt to actively drive someone out of your mind with your Intelligence, as described above. In general, people with a high level of Mental Fortitude are almost impossible to control or delude for more than a Panel or two, since they can mount a strong resistance, every Panel, at very little cost. They are also the ones most likely to turn the tables on a telepath, stunning her by resisting with extreme effort (see above).

A character with Telepathy can take Mental Fortitude as a +1 Option. In this case, the Advantage applies not only to the free Mental Defense she receives with her power but also to any additional Mental Defense that she buys, beyond that.

Area Effect

The Area Effect Advantage is extremely powerful when applied to Telepathy (as it is when applied to most powers). It allows the telepath to place extra stones in Telepathy to increase his area, so that he can affect everyone in that zone equally, without paying for each individual. This allows you to link up with more than one person per Panel, initially. It is also

Telepathy (continued):

extremely valuable when you are trying to maintain several links. For example, a telepath who already had control of three people could spend 3 stones per Panel on each of them to maintain his hold (going over the minimum under the assumption that they might try to break free), for a total of 9 stones. With Area Effect, however, he could simply spend 3 stones for that level of general control and 3 more stones to get an area with a diameter of 25'   (assuming that all three are within this range), for a total of only 6 stones. In this manner, a telepath can affect *many* people at once, and each one will have to overcome the same Resistance, individually, to escape.

The only disadvantage of this method is that everyone in the area must be affected in the same way; for example, they must all be given the same command, or they must all see the same illusion. Of course, a telepath with lots of Energy to burn and a high Telepathy Action Number could pick and choose which victims are covered by the area effect and which are under direct and individual supervision (and, thus, must be paid for individually).