# Powers

The word “Powers” refers to the various sources of supernatural effects the Exalt can have upon the world, including (but not limited to): Charms, Evocations, Spells, and Martial Arts Techniques.

## System Presentation

Powers are presented in a manner similar to the following:

**Cost:** 2m  
**Type:** Primary  
**Mins:** Awareness 3

### Cost

Designates what character resources it takes to use the Power. A Power of no cost (such as Permanent effects) will be designated with “--”.

* **m** -- Motes of Essence, which can be a chosen combination of Personal or Peripheral
  + Some Powers will specifically designate (personal) or (peripheral) in their cost.
* **i** -- If used in a Combat Scene, requires **Impulse**. If used in an Encounter Scene, requires **Influence.**
* **sm** -- Sorcerous Motes, which are described in more detail in the [Sorcery](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fg4i3K9kSNsWkPiqsuHOSElKFzvc_E58KwLs5MT6cKk/edit?usp=sharing).

### Type

The Power’s Type designates how the power may be activated, and then how long it is active for in the format:

**Type:** (Activation Type); (Duration)

So, a Power that activates *Reflexively* and is then *active* for the remainder of the scene would be written as:

**Type:** Reflexive; Scene

If there is no duration written, the power is considered *Instant*, and immediately dissipates after activation.

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| **Terminating Active Powers**  An Exalt may willfully terminate a Power earlier than its stated duration (unless specifically stated otherwise.) However, they must then pay the activation cost again if they want to reuse the power. |

#### **Activation Type**

* **Primary.** Consumes a Primary Action Slot. Only one Primary Action may be taken per turn.
* **Secondary**. Consumes a Secondary Action Slot. Only one Secondary action may be taken per turn.
* **Supplemental.** Enhances a Primary or Secondary Action. There is no limit to the number of supplemental Powers that may be combined together.
* **Reflexive**. Conditional powers that may be used outside of normal turn order. So long as the condition is met, the Reflexive Power may always be used.
* **Permanent**. Once purchased, this power is always active.

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| **Timing Conflicts**  If there is ever a timing conflict, such as with two Reflexive Charms going off at once, the resolution goes according to the *defender’s choice*.  If that is still unclear, there should be a contested roll using the relevant *Finesse* Attribute. |

### Minimum Requirements

When buying a Power, there are certain Minimums that must first be met--such as the dot Rating in a specific Ability.

## Charms

Charms are the natural expression of a character’s essence, a specific and trained way for their internal power to be expressed upon the world.

These powers are inherently personal, and each expression will vary from individual to individual: those that are listed are simply generalizations and categorization for easy shorthand.

Typically, a character does not know they are using a specific charm with a specific name--they simply know that their instinctual channeling of their essence will produce the desired effect.

### Greater Charms

Greater Charms are powers more powerful, and far more complicated to learn and perfect than a normal Charm.

A character must first be at **Essence 3** to learn a Greater Charm, and it will cost **double** the amount of XP to learn.

## Making New Powers

Players and Storytellers are encouraged to work together to craft and use Custom Charms that fit individual characters and their needs--the provided charms are intended to cover most common uses of charms, but could never encompass all that an Exalt *could* do.

Charms and Custom Charms do not have any sort of "niche protection" from each other. Do not be afraid to create Custom Charms that have similar effects.

Making custom charms can be a bit difficult, so let's run through an example.

##### Example: Searing Sunfire Interdiction

**Identify what the need is**

*I want a high-powered charm damage that also does Area of Effect (flurry) attacks, and alsos fits within the Solar Theme.*

### Imagine the visuals/effects

Exalted is a game centered around role-playing, scene interactions, and heroes being grander than life. The impact a charm has upon a *scene* is often of primary importance to the game. The mechanics are simply there to make sure that is represented accurately.

Try to envision what your character is actually *doing*. Seek inspiration from literature, games, and other charms. Not everything needs to be super-cool and flashy, but spending a moment to think through the actions and steps a character might do for the desired effect.

In this example charm's case, the inspiration comes from a natural source: a cascading sunbeam. As well, it’s well represented in popular video games: a beam of light cascades from the heavens and damages those in its way.

### Brainstorm Secondary effects And Limitations

Now that we have a visual effect--a beam of light appearing over the target area--it's time to think of the consequences of that charm.

* Sunlight is a heavy theme here, so it may do extra damage against Creatures of Darkness.
* It's a bright beam of light. It's going to be pretty obvious.
* It's an archery charm, so an arrow needs to be used. Maybe you fire an arrow into the sky, pierce a cloud and the sun peers through?
  + Access to the sky then?
  + Does it need access to the Sun itself, since it's a sunbeam? Can you not use this in the Underworld?
* Does sunlight hurt other Solars? Or themselves? Are they immune to their own powers?
* Is the attack indiscriminate in its area? Can the Solar exclude allies?

With that list of thoughts gathered, we can sort through what additional limitations and benefits the charm will have, using motes and Impulse cost to assist in that manner.

### Double check the theme

Solars have a theme of *excellency*, so we should try to avoid too many limitations. As well, their powers should come from *within*, rather than externally. Let's discard the *access to the Sun* right away.

*Damaging Creatures of Darkness* seems appropriate, let us keep it in. We'll have to make sure the extra damage isn't too little or too much by gauging it against other charms with that effect.

*Access to the sky* is limiting--you wouldn't be able to use this underground or in tight enclosed spaces. That's a reasonable limitation, and easily worked around in most cases.

Excluding allies from the attack could be useful, but that may make the charm too powerful. Best just to leave it as a full, indiscriminate AoE attack--much akin to a bomb. The player will have to work around that.

*"Solars being immune"* is an interesting one, because it's both a benefit and a limitation. It means the solar could center the beam of light around themselves--and their party members, if they are Solars--and not be hurt. A sort of an addendum to the above limitation.

However, there are a couple of items to consider: the Solar thematic rely more on "human paragon" rather than "sun-powered." This effect would not be as appropriate as a Dragon-Blooded being able to stand in a plume of fire. As well, with all of the other rules written and in place, the Charm description has already become medium length. There is no inherent rule about a charm's description length, but it is a quick and easy metric to see if the charm has too much (or little) stuffed into it.

For these reasons we will leave off that particular benefit/limitation.

### Add/Adjust numbers

This charm has ended up being pretty powerful, but that was its intention. However, this does mean that I should put its Mote and Impulse cost up at a higher level than normal.

### Judging Costs

#### Damage/Accuracy

+1 Base Damage is roughly equivalent to +2 Dice Accuracy. To make things easier on us, I will frame things primarily in +X Damage.

#### Standard Attacks

The Base Ability *Push the Attack* pins +1 dmg per 2 Impulse. With the Recovery Ability, an Impulse is worth 2 Peripheral Motes. This means that pricing the mote cost for +1 dmg should never be at or more than 4 Motes, or 2 Impulse--it would be a worthless charm. The following pricing is suggested:

1. 1 Impulse for +1Dmg/+2Dice
2. 2 Motes for +1Dmg/+2Dice.
3. 3 Motes for (+Essence Dice)
4. 4 Motes for (+Essence Damage), 1 impulse

#### Flurry Attacks

The total amount of damage should be considerably lower for Flurry attacks--which are typically about clearing Lesser Foes from the battlefield. Since this attack hits multiple targets, the Mote and Impulse cost should double from a Standard Attack. As well, the total amount granted should be capped, typically at (Essence).

* **Cost:** 2 Impulse for +1Dmg/+2Dice
* **Cost:** 4 Motes for +1Dmg/+2Dice

#### Unsoakable/Undodgeable

Remember, **an attack must have a counter**. Typically this means it cannot *both* be unsoakable *and* undodgeable. These effects should typically be around Essence 3, and no earlier than Essence 2.

These effects must *always*  have an Impulse cost.

### Iterate/Edit

I have lied a bit to you with this Example: I have given the impression that the process was an ordered, straightforward process, where one task was completed before the other. This is completely false.

In reality, the actual process is to go through again and again, often skipping steps and going back to them. You typically don't get the final version of a Charm or ability on the first pass, and a lot of the unique nature and interesting abilities come out through multiple edits.

### Avoiding Pitfalls

Making Charms and Powers is more of an art than a precise science.

#### Filling in Thematic Holes

The first question you should ask yourself when creating a Charm is “Am I *just* trying to fill in an intentional weakness of an Ability?” If so, you should take a double look at what your intent is, analyze if there is an alternate way, or proceed very carefully.

It’s often the first instinct to try to fill such a hole in--after all, we often want our characters to be the best at what they do, and seeing such a glaring hole can be frustrating.

However, doing so is often detrimental to the longevity of the game--a fully fleshed out character is often one that is flawed--and so is the same with Abilities and Powers.

The easiest example to show is the difference between Melee and Archery combat. Melee deals damage at targets that are nearby, while Archery deals damage from afar. If you use charms to “fill in the gaps” of range between the two, they suddenly lose most, if not all, of their distinct natures from each other and simply become “Combat.”

This isn’t to say you *can’t* make a Melee charm that deals damage at a range--there are those that already exist--but you should go into charm creation realizing that *some* (but not all)holes are *intentional.* If you are to make charms in those spaces, they should respect why the hole is there in the first place.

#### Use Sparingly: Dice Tricks (TN Shifting, Double X’s)

“Dice Tricks” are effects that rely on the face values of dice, and often contain wording such as “Whenever a 1 is rolled…” These types of mechanics should be considered **very carefully**, and used **extremely sparingly**.

When using a Dice Pool system, such as Exalted does with its (Att+Abi)x d10’s, all players around the table will start to rely on *memorization* of dice faces as symbols, rather than individually interpreting the numbers.

In essence, people will start to quickly stop seeing the numbers:

**{ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 }**

Instead,minds will short circuit this, seeing this as the much more manageable:

**{ 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 2 }**

If you create a power that has “Dice tricks” built into it, such as doubling any number with an 8 or higher, *you mess with this short-circuit memorization*. This will slow down play considerably as players will suddenly have to focus on the dice, reinterpret the dice as actual numbers again, and then potentially undo their memorization.

**Only use a Dice Trick if it is necessary**. A sparing number of these effects here and there--perhaps restricted by a conditional--is fine. But if too many of them appear, it will slow down play considerably!