The ubiquitous "utility belt", the hero's best friend, can be a player's worst nightmare when it comes to stocking all of those various pockets and pouches with just the right equipment for every occasion.

This Gadget Guide looks at options for utility belts (and bags, bandoiliers, and containers of all sorts) and the things you carry in them so your hero is never caught unprepared!



THE UTILITY ARRAY

The usual configuration for a utility belt is in an array of alternate items (*Hero's Handbook*, page 136) the user can pull out one at a time. This works well for most things, although it can limit combinations like wielding a defenive and offensive gadget at once, or using either alongside a movement gadget. For this reason, characters may pay power points for some items outside of the utility belt's array so they are always available.

Although the array is treated as a single "power" or "piece of equipment" in terms of cost, in play it is collection of items, so a character may, for example, lose a single alternate from the array due to a disarm or similar effect, or lose the entire thing, if the container it is held in is taken away.

WIDE ARRAYS

Alternately, characters have the option of paying a higher base cost in order to "widen" the array to mixand-match alternates from it, so long as their total does not exceed the increased base cost. This differs from a Dynamic Array (*Hero's Handbook*, page 138) in that each alternate is fixed; the character must assign all the necessary points to the alternate or none of them, whereas Dynamic Alternates vary.

Example: Knicknack has a Utility array with a base cost of 25 points for its most expensive gadget. His player chooses to widen the array by paying a base cost of 50 points, plus the usual 1 point per Alternate, but now Knicknack can use any two Alternates at once, so long as their total values as individual items does not exceed 50 points.

UTILITY FEATURES

Utility gadgets, as the name implies, are practically made for the Feature effect, and vice versa. A great many utility items are nothing more than a rank or two of Feature providing a particular benefit or convenience for the character, ranging from a toolset to access to information or the ability to overcome a circumstance penalty (or to gain a circumstance bonus) for having the "right tool for the job". In addition to the specific items listed in this Guide, the following Feature guidelines may be useful for creating utility gadgets. A Feature effect may be used to:

Provide a bonus: The

Feature offers a circumstance bonus in particular instances where it is useful, such as making it easier to peform a particular task or use a particular skill or aspect of a skill. Whether the Feature provides a +2 or +5 bonus depends on how common the circumstance is expected to be; +2 for circumstances that occur more than a quarter of the time, +5 for less frequent

Overcome a penalty: Similarly, the Feature removes a circumstance penalty from a particular task or situation, ranging from the penalties for poor visibility or environmental conditions to those for lacking proper tools or equipment. See the various penalties assessed against skill use in **Chapter 4** of the M&M *Hero's Handbook* for examples. Whether the Feature overcomes a –2 or –5 penalty depends on frequency, as described for bonuses, previously.

circumstances.

Fulfill a useful function: This is the broadest category of Features, since they are more difficult to quantify. Essentially, one rank of the Feature effect is good for the ability to perform a specific useful function. The emphasis here is upon useful, a function that is mere background color is just a descriptor. For example, it's not a Feature to be able to use an item as a bottle opener. Even if that is handy in some situations, it's not all that useful in game terms. A multitool, however, is useful in a broad enough range of situations to qualify as a Feature (*Hero's Handbook*, page 163).

OFFENSIVE UTILITIES

Offensive gadgets in a utility belt tend to be either small enough to fit into the palm of the hand, or collapsable to that size, able to quickly expand or unfold to full size for use. They supplement the user's own combat skills, particularly by providing some ranged attack options and ways of taking down multiple opponents.

As with most weapons requiring ammunition, offensive utilities are assumed to be essentially unlimited in number, unless a flaw like Unreliable is specifically applied

ROBOTIC SHARK REPELLANT?

Utility belts are home to some of the most oddball and unexpected gadgets. Some characters always seem to have just the right thing at the right time to solve any problem, no matter how unlikely it might be for them to be carrying something like it around with them.

At the basic level, utility belts offer excellent opportunities to spend hero points for on-hand equipment and power stunts (Hero's Handbook, pages 161 and 20, respectively). Need an antitoxin or a dose of powerful defoliant? Spend a hero point and you just "happen" to have some!

For more extreme cases, Gamemasters can consider allowing "omni-items"—essentially a placeholder power for any effect that reasonably fits into the descriptors of the character's utility gadgets. This is a Variable effect (*Hero's Handbook*, page 132) often with an Action modifier (depending on how quickly the character can retrieve the item) and possibly a Quirk or Limit if the item has to be less than 1 rank of effect (5 power points of cost), such as:

Variable 1 (any tool or skill equipment), Free Action, Quirk (Limited to 2 equipment points or less, -3 points) • 6 points

to limit their uses, or the GM chooses to apply a complication where the user runs out. See **Ammo**, **Batteries**, **and Charges** on page 161 of the *Hero's Handbook* for additional discussion. This is separate from any Removable modifier on the gadgets, which may result in the user losing access to them in different ways.

Offensive utilities are often small and limited compared to other weapons; the examples given in the *Hero's Handbook*, for example are more likely to affect only minion or and low power-level opponents rather than foes of the recommended starting power level of 10 or more. This is largely intentional, as utility users tend to fight more low-level foes, particularly with weapons. However, in dealing with more powerful opponents, they do have some options:

- Advantages like Power Attack can greatly enhance the effect of a direct attack weapon like brass knuckles or a throwing weapon (following) and users of utility gadgets typically have enough skill in wielding them to make this sacrifice of accuracy for power while retaining a good chance to succeed with their attacks
- Offensive gadgets may be useful for extra effort, particularly power stunts to target a foe's known weak points or providing a circumstance bonus for some other action, such as an Intimidation check; the weapon itself isn't so important as the flashy effect making the hero appear menacing.
- Lastly, the only real limit on offensive utilities is the same as all weapons in the game: the series power level. The GM may require some high-powered weapons to be devices rather than equipment (see The Limits of Equipment, Hero's Handbook, page 162, for details).

BRASS KNUCKLES

A heavy striking plate that fits over the knuckles, increasing the damage of the wielder's punches. Originally made of brass, modern versions are more likely chromed steel or advanced composites.

A set of brass knuckles might have high-tech or magical capabilities to inflict additional damage, channeling

kinetic energy, electricity, or some similar damaging effect. This gives the Damage effect at least two descriptors: bludgeoning and one other. A weapon with the Variable Descriptor modifier may even have different "settings" for energy or damage types.

Brass Knuckles: Strength-based Damage • 1 point per rank.

CAPTURE WEAPON

A throwing weapon intended to hinder and capture a target, such as a bolo, collapsible net, or even fast-hardening foam grenade. The latter versions may also have the Burst or Cloud Area modifiers.

Capture Weapon: Ranged Affliction (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized), Extra Condition, Limited Degree • 2 points per rank.

COLLAPSIBLE TRUNCHEON

A club or baton that collapses small enough to fit into the palm of the hand (or a utility pouch or pocket). A version able to extend out into a bo- or quarterstaff has an additional rank of Reach, increasing cost to 4 points.

Collapsible Truncheon: Strength Based Damage 2, Subtle (concealable) • *3 points*.

MINI-GRENADES

A single palm-sized device or a handful of smaller, pelletor ballbearing sized ones. Mini-grenades, like their larger cousins, are either explosives, flash-bangs, or gas weapons covering an area around where they are used.

Mini-Grenades: Choose one of the following, with the others available as Alternate Effects:

- Explosive: Ranged Burst Area Damage 3 points per rank.
- Flash Bang: Ranged Burst Area Affliction (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware) • 3 points per rank.
- Gas: Ranged Cloud Area Affliction (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 3 points per rank.



THROWING WEAPON

A small handheld and aerodynamic object, designed to be thrown as a weapon. This might be a boomerang, flying disk, sphere (like a small baseball), or some other shape based on the character's theme.

Characters often have various advantages involving their throwing weapons, from Improved Critical and Improved Disarm to Throwing Mastery. Some weapons may also provide Enhanced Advantages, like Improved Critical, which are qualities of the weapon, rather than the wielder.

If a throwing weapon is Strength-based, apply additional ranks of the Ranged modifier to cover the amount of additional Strength the weapon can handle, such as: Strength-based Damage 1, Ranged 3, meaning up to 2 ranks of the thrower's Strength is added to the weapon's damage when it is thrown.

Throwing Weapon: Ranged Damage • 2 points per rank.

DEFENSIVE UTILITIES

Given the size limitations of most utility gadgets, defensive utilities tend to be focused on dealing with particular hazards rather than providing overall defense.

Defensive and other utility gadgets are assumed to be for one user, the character has only one gasmask or set of climbing gear for example. The character can share or loan out the gadget like the +0 version of Affects Others:

losing the use of it while someone else has it. The GM can also allow the application of the +1 version Affects Others modifier to grant an additional copy of that gadget the character can provide while still being able to use the original.

ANTITOXIN

A chemical compound designed to neutralize the effects of certain known toxins or venoms. Applying an antitoxin grants a +5 circumstance bonus on resistance checks against the toxin.

Antitoxin: Feature (+5 bonus on resistance checks against toxins) • 1 point.

GASMASK

A foldable filter mask that provides protection against inhaled gases and those directed at the face (such as eye protection against tear gas).

Gasmask: Immunity 1 (gases) • 1 point.

REBREATHER

A small oxygen cylinder and filter with a mouthpiece, providing a few minutes of breathable air. Generally, having a rebreather run out is a complication.

Rebreather: Immunity 2 (suffocation) • 2 points.

MOVEMENT UTILITIES

Like defensive utility, most movement utilities need to be small and collapsible in order to be easily carried. Many are intended for emergency use or as back-ups.

CLIMBING GEAR

Gloves and boots equipped with suction cups or micrograbbers and similar gear provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Athletics checks to climb.

Climbing Gear: Feature (climbing bonus) • 1 point.

GLIDER

A foldable parawing or ultralight, able to deploy in an instant to serve as a glider. This gadget is often built into a costume component like a cape or cloak, or even a backpack or beltpack from which the glider deploys. Such gliders rarely have more than 4 ranks of Flight, unless they also have some sort of rocket-booster to provide additional momentum.

Glider: Flight, Gliding • 1 point per rank.

PARACHUTE

An even simpler version of the glider (previously) intended primarily to slow a user's fall to a safe speed, allowing for a safe landing.

Parachute: Movement (Safe Fall) • 2 points.

SMOKE BOMBS

These tiny items produce a brief burst of smoke—or perhaps a flash of light, or both—providing you with a momentary distraction sufficient to make a Stealth check to hide while you are being observed. Essentially, with a sufficiently high check result, smoke bombs allow you to instantly "disappear". In the case of a non-player character, the GM may wish to simply consider this escape a complication, allowing it to automatically succeed, and awarding the player(s) a hero point.

Smoke Bombs: Enhanced Advantage 1 (Hide in Plain Sight) • 1 point.

SWING LINE

This is a gadget able to project a study swing cable, suitable for swinging from tall buildings and the like. It might be a spring- or gas-powered grappling gun or high-tech spinnerette projecting artificial "webbing" or the like.

Swing Line: Movement (Swinging) • 2 points.

ZIP LINE

Similar to a swing line (previously) this approach sets up a line between your starting point and a destination that

allows you to zip along it using gravity, and possibly a small motorized device, to move at greater speed.

Zip Line: Flight 3, Gliding, Limited to between two points, Platform • 1 point.

GENERAL UTILITIES

General utility gadgets cover a wide range of tools for use with different skills, and various communication, surveillence, and burglary devices.

COMMLINK

A button-sized radio able to handle voice communication with other devices on its frequency up to about a mile away (longer if patched into the cellular network or a provide network of signal boosters). A Subtle commlink is encoded or scrambled to prevent eavesdropping.

Commlink: Feature (Communication Link) • 1 point (2 points if Subtle).

CUTTING TORCH

A tool with a high-temperature flame for cutting through metal. Variations on the cutting torch include a water-saw (which uses a high-pressure stream of water with fine grit to cut through materials) or thermite paste, a high-temperature chemical compound for burning through metal locks, bars, and similar obstacles. It may also include small amounts of powerful acids used similarly.

Given the descriptors of this gadget, the Precise extra, and the fact that it only works on objects (which do not recover traints lost to Weaken), it ignores the normal limit on Weaken effects and can continue to weaken the target's Toughness even past the first rank of effect.

Cutting Torch: Damage 1, Precise, Linked to Weaken Toughness 1 • 3 points.

DIGTAL RECORDER

A palm-sized device for recording audio and/or video information onto a digital data-card. One Feature rank is sufficient for recording audio or taking still pictures, two allows for full audio-video recording.

Digital Recorder: Feature (recording) • 1 point for audio or photographs, 2 points for both audio and video.

EVIDENCE KIT

A set of tools for the Gather Evidence use of the Investigation skill. Removing any circumstance penalties for lacking proper tools. At 2 ranks, the kit includes the essentials of a portable crime lab suitable for the Analyze Evidence use of Investigation as well.

Evidence Kit: Feature (tools, Investigation) • 1 or 2 points.

FIRST-AID KIT

This small kit contains anticeptic, bandages, and other essential supplies for using the Treatment skill. Higher ranks of this Feature may even grant a circumstance bonus to Treatment, at the GM's discretion.

First-aid Kit: Feature (tools, Treatment) • 1 point.

FLASHLIGHT

A compact, high-powered light able to eliminate penalties for darkness in the immediate area. Stealth types may use Subtle flashlights that emit infrared or ultraviolet light so only the user (wearing IR or UV lenses) can see what the flashlight illuminates. There's no visible light to give away the user's presence or position.

Flashlight: Environment 1 (light) • 1 point (2 points if Subtle).

LOCKPICKS

A small set of tools suitable for using the Technology skill to open locks. It is assumed to include tools for both mechanical and electronic locks.

Lockpicks: Feature (tools, Technololgy) • 1 point.

MULTI-TOOL

A foldable modular tool usable for a number of functions. A multi-tool reduces the circumstance penalty for not having tools from -5 to -2, as it may serve for a number of different purposes, but is not necessarily the ideal tool for any given job. At the GM's discretion, a highly adaptable multi-tool with 2 Feature ranks may substitute for *any* tool, eliminating the circumstance penalty entirely.

Multi-tool: Feature (reduce penalty) • 1 point.

PAINT TAG BOMB

A small compressed-gas device that sprays an indelible ink onto the target, making it easier to track down and perhaps preventing criminals from using stolen goods or concealing their identities. An Insidious version of this gadget sprays ink that is only visible under ultraviolet light. Unless placed for detonation (such as inside a bag of loot) a paint tag bomb requires an attack check to place at the target.

Paint Tag Bomb: Feature (paint tag) • 1 point (2 points if Subtle).

RESTRAINTS

Plastic zip-ties or locking metal cuffs intended to restrain a prisoner. They can only be placed on a helpless or unresisting target and impose the disabled and vulnerable condi-

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

"How much for one with everything?" you might ask. As discussed under **The Utility Array**, the gadgets from this Guide are often kept together as a single device, used largely one at a time as they are needed, with the overall array used for power stunts to "happen" to have other items on-hand, or in the seemingly bottomless container where the regular gadgets are kept.

The cost for having *everything* in this Guide in a single utility belt (or other container) is the cost of the most expensive gadget, plus 1 point for each additional item as an Alternate Effect. The most expensive items are the mini-grenades; assuming a rank of 6 for them (costing 18 points), the total cost of the container would be 45 points (a base 18 plus 27 additional items). This is in equipment points if the utilities are treated entirely as equipment (requiring 9 ranks of the Equipment advantage) or it can be a device with the Removable modifier. Note that containers for utility gadgets are typically not Easy to Remove, even if some of the individual items may be.

Even if you don't have "one with everything" keep in mind that you can always spend a hero point to temporarily add one of the items fron this Guide to your hero's arsenal for one use when the need arises!

tions (immobilized and vulnerable if the target's legs are restrained). Restraints are DC 20 to escape using Sleight of Hand and Toughness 5 to break. An additional Feature rank increases either escape DC or Toughness by 5.

Restraints: Feature (restraint) • 1 point.

TRACER BUG

A tiny radio transmitter about the size of a pinhead that can be attached to a target and used to track the target's location and movements with a range of about a mile. It requires either an attack check or a Sleight of Hand check to plant a tracer onto a target.

A similar bug transmits audio information, serving as a listening device for eavesdropping on conversations nearby. With two Feature ranks, the gadget can do both.

Tracer Bug: Feature (tracking signal) • 1 point.

WRIST-COMP

A compact computer, typically built into the back of a glove or wrist-band for easy access (although it may have distrubuted parts elsewhere on the wearer's person). A wrist-comp provides the tools necessary for use of the Technology skill for interacting with computer networks. A skilled character can use it to acquire information, alter records, or access and control computer systems and their associated equipment.

Wrist-Comp Feature (tools, Technology) • 1 point.

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MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS GADGET GUIDE: UTILITY

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