**Combat**

Sooner or later, bringing justice to the streets of the city will mean combat. Whether they are low-level thugs, or super-powered menaces, there are tons of bad guys just itching to get at you. When all other means have failed, and it is time to power up your energy blasts, here are the rules.

**Distance Scale**

Combat is played on a map of hexes. Each hex (since the hexes on most maps are one inch, a hex is often called an inch) represents 2 meters. To summarize:

***1 hex = 1” = 2 meters***

### Time Scale

Combat is played in a series of turns called rounds. Each round represents a frame in a comic book, or a short descriptive passage in a novel. For those situations that need a more accurate representation of time, each round is about 3-5 seconds long.

***1 round = 3-5 seconds***

**Tactics**

Certain characters have talents or powers that give Tactics Points. When tactics points are earned, they are put into a pool for the entire team to use. Tactics points can be used as they are needed and can do the following:

* Reroll a failed attack
* Reroll a failed saving throw
* Force your opponent to reroll a successful attack against you
* Reroll a failed task
* Add one or more to an attack roll at the rate of +1/tactics point – you might use this instead of rerolling if you missed by 1 or 2
* Add one or more to a defense roll at the rate of +1/tactics point – you might use this instead of rerolling if you are just hit

**Initiative**

At the start of battle before the first combat round, each combatant generates their initiative score:

***Initiative Score = 1d12 + Reflex Bonus + Wit Bonus***

Ties are resolved in order of the combatants’ importance, The players are “heroes”, while creatures and NPCs have their importance shown in their monster listing.

* Bosses
* Heroes
* Lieutenants
* Soldiers and Trained Agents
* Minions, Thugs, and Civilians

Once the initiative order is set, it remains unchanged for the rest of the combat. However, before the start of any combat round, either side may ***call for a new initiative roll*** by spending a tactics point or an energy. This will force all combatants to reroll initiative and use the new initiative order for subsequent combat rounds.

If someone calls for a new initiative order, no one else can do so that round. Even if the new roll did not go your way, you are stuck with that order for at least one combat round.

**Surprise**

In certain situations, one side in a combat might surprise another. Conditions for surprise are up to the GM and should be based on the situation leading up to the conflict.

The side that surprises its opponents gets a free round of action.

The surprised side cannot act, but can use any appropriate defenses if they can see the attacks coming. Surprised defenders that cannot see the attacks coming can only use their Base Defense.

The surprised side also loses its opportunity to make a tactics roll.

**Actions, Half-Actions, and Free Actions**

When it is your turn to act, you can perform a full action, or two half-actions. Additionally, any number of free actions can be taken during your turn.

A ***full action*** is defined as something you could complete in a round. This might include climbing over a fallen tree, sawing through a thick rope, tying a bootlace, or rummaging in your pack. Anything the GM decides could be done in 3-5 seconds, or a frame in a comic book. Some examples of full actions include:

* Move your full movement allotment
* Use a sprint action to move 2x your movement allotment
* Activate a Full activation power
* Rummage through a pack
* Tie/Untie a knot
* Navigate an obstacle
* Open a stuck door
* Lift something really heavy
* Break out of a grapple
* Saw through a thick rope

A ***half-action*** is something that takes only a second or two. A combatant can perform two half-actions each round. Examples of half-actions include:

* Move up to half your movement allotment (rounded up)
* Attack an opponent (ends your turn)
* Activate a Half, or Attack power
* Draw a weapon, or put a weapon away
* Stand up from a prone position
* Open an easy door
* Pick up a light object
* Cut a thin rope (requires a muscle check)

A ***free action*** requires no time and you are free to do them as needed during your turn. Examples include:

* Speaking
* Drop an object on the ground
* Drop prone
* Activate a Free or Conditional power (if the power’s conditions are met)

**Holding Your Action**

You do not have to act when it is your turn. Instead, you can ***hold your action*** by either ***delaying*** or ***declaring*** your held action.

When you ***delay an action,*** you wait and choose to act later in the initiative order. After each combatant takes their action, you have the option to use your delayed action and take your turn.

If you ***declare your action,*** you save your action and then state a specific condition which will trigger your turn. For instance, you could hold your turn and state, “I will attack anyone that comes within reach.” When your declared action is triggered, it happens immediately and preempts everything else.

Once you use your held action, your place in the initiative order changes to the current position in the order. So, if you delay and take your action after the last combatant goes, you are now last in the initiative order for subsequent combat rounds.

**Facing**

Every combatant has a facing. Characters can face any of the six hex sides of the hex they occupy. They cannot face a hex corner. The three hexes in the front of the character are called his front. The hex directly opposite the one the character is facing is his rear. The other two hexes are his flank.

During your turn, changing your facing takes no time. However, once you attack someone, you must turn so as to have your target in one of your front hexes.

When it is not your turn, you can still change facing, but only if you are aware of an attack. If an attacker starts his turn in front of you, you can freely turn to face him. However, if he starts his turn from behind you, you are not permitted to change your facing and your opponent will get a flanking attack. Thus, you cannot “run around” someone to flank them; you have to start your turn behind him, and remain there when attacking to get the flanking bonus.

If you do flank your opponent when you attack, you get a +2 to your attack roll.

**Attack Skills**

You have three attack skills that come from your chosen fighting style. When you attack an opponent, the skill you use is based on the power you use.

* **Strike** – Used for melee and touch attack powers.
* **Shoot** – Used for ranged attack powers.
* **Zap** – Used for mental attack powers.

**Defense Skills**

You have three defense skills from your chosen fighting style. The skill you use to defend depends on what type of attack is being used against you.

* **Block** – Used to defend against melee attacks.
* **Dodge** – Used to defend against ranged, touch, or melee attacks.
* **Zap** – Used to defend against any power that uses Zap as its attack skill.

**Multiple Attacks (Block and Dodge)**

You may defend as many times in a single round as is necessary. Each time, you can pick the defense skill that is most advantageous, as long as that defense skill is capable of avoiding the type of attack coming at you.

For instance, if you were being attacked by 2 thugs wielding clubs, you might block the first attack, and then dodge the second. However, each time you use the same defense skill in a combat round, you take a cumulative -3 penalty to subsequent uses of that skill.

If you face three attacks in a combat round and choose to block all three of them, you will block the first at your skill level. The second you block at –3. The third you block at –6. The penalties continue to accrue until you reach your base defense. You can never defend at a score lower than your base defense unless you are unable to move.

At the end of the combat round, these penalties reset.

***Example****: Beetle is attacked by three thugs, each wielding a nasty club. Since both Block or Dodge can be used against melee attacks, Beetle can use either skill to defend himself. Beetle’s Block is 16 and his Dodge is only 10, so he will use block.*

*Beetle blocks the first attack at a skill of 16, but he takes a -3 penalty against the second attack, and his defense is a 13. Against the third attack, Beetle can either block at a skill of 10 (16-6) or he could dodge using his Dodge of 10.*

***Another Example****: Beetle is now being attacked by three thugs using guns. He cannot use his high Block skill now; he has to use his Dodge of 10.*

*Beetle dodges the first attack with his skill of 10. The second attack he defends with a skill of 7 (10-3). Against the third attack, Beetle would take a -6 penalty, making his defense a 4, but since his Base Defense is a 6, he can not defend with a score lower than 6.*

**Multiple Attacks (Zap)**

Zap is the exception to this rule. Unlike Block and Dodge, your Zap defense actually gets better as it is used. Each time you are ***hit*** with a zap attack, you get a +2 to future zap defenses. This bonus does not reset each round, but instead lasts until the end of the current battle.

***Example****: After defeating the thugs, Beetle is face-to-face with the villain controlling them, Mind Master. Mind Master opens with a vertigo power that uses Zap to hit. Beetle defends against this power with his Zap of 13. Unfortunately, Mind Master has a much higher Zap attack, and hits our hapless hero.*

*Later in the fight, Mind Master tries to mind control Beetle, again using his Zap skill to attack. Because Beetle has been hit by such an attack earlier in this fight, he gets a +2 to his Zap defense, and defends with a 15. Unfortunately, he is hit again and is controlled by Mind Master.*

*Even later in the same battle, Mind Master tries to control Beetle again. Because Beetle has suffered Zap attacks twice, he has a +4 to his Zap defense, and defends at a 17.*