



# HERO IN 2 PAGES

So, you've just seen the HERO System Rulebooks, and *they're over seven hundred pages!*

## DON'T PANIC!

Take a deep breath, relax, and read this. Because *Everything* you need to know to understand and play HERO System Can be boiled down to two pages!

## Dice Rolls

Hero System uses two kinds of dice rolls.

The first is a **Success Roll**. In a Success Roll, you roll under a number on 3d6 (three six-sided dice). A total of 18 is always a failure; a total of 3 is always a success. Success Rolls are displayed as X-, such as 12- for "Roll 12 or under on 3d6". The lower you roll under, the better.

The second is an **Effect Roll**. In an Effect Roll, Xd6 is rolled - That is, an arbitrary number (3, 5, 8, whatever) of six-sided dice. Effect rolls may be counted in two ways:

**Counting the BODY:** Count the number of dice. Subtract any 1's rolled; add +1 for any 6's.

**Counting the Total:** Simply total the die roll.

1/2 d6 is half the result of a d6. For BODY, that means a roll of 4-6 is +1 and 1-3 is 0. For a Total roll, 1-2 is +1, 3-4 is +2 and 5-6 is +3.

+1 is just that - "Add +1 to the Total". Effects of +1 adds no BODY. Counting Killing BODY Damage is the only exception.

## Damage

Damage types are **Normal Damage** and **Killing Damage**. Normal Damage, as you may expect, is an Effect Roll for the BODY (health) damage done and is totaled for the STUN (exactly what it sounds like) damage.

Killing Damage is the only case where you count the Total for Killing BODY damage; this is multiplied by 1/2 d6 for STUN.

Both Normal and Killing damage may be lethal; however, Killing damage typically represents the effects of weapons made to kill, rather than stun - Swords, guns, knives and lasers rather than fists, clubs, concussion grenades or non-explosive bursts of fire. It is more likely to kill than Normal Damage. Some attacks do only STUN damage, which can't kill.

Some non-damage powers call for **Effect Rolls** where you only count the BODY and ignore the Total - This is how you tell how hard it is for the Entangled enemy to chop through your Spiderweb spell, for example. In some other cases, you don't use BODY, and just count the Total.

## Character Points

Campaigns are usually divided into **Superheroic** (high-powered Character Points games, where Points buy nearly everything, including equipment) and **Heroic** (lower-powered, more realistic games, where things like common equipment only costs money).

Your GM will tell you what you need to spend Character Points on and how many Character Points you have to spend. If you do not take Complications, you gain less than your total Character Points, up to the Campaign Limit - Typically 20-30% of your total Character Points. You are generally given a total and, of that total, a sub-total of how many come from complications.

**Experience Points** are spent in the same way as Character Points and may be spent on anything you wish, within the campaign limits. For example, you probably can't buy a Fireball spell in a modern espionage campaign, or a firearm in a high fantasy campaign - Or, likely, a spaceship in either.

You can also buy off Complications, provided you clear it with the GM. This can simulate such things as buying a cybernetic prosthetic for that missing eye; spending time reconciling with a Rival; working to improve a Negative Reputation or just working hard to improve a Money-based Complication (perhaps clearing a debt or advancing your paycheck in your "day job").

## Characteristics

A **Characteristic Success Roll** is  $9 + (\text{that Characteristic} / 5)$ , rounded off. Thus, a Characteristic of 10 has a Success Roll of 11-. STR, DEX, CON, INT, EGO and PRE all have Success Rolls. Most people have 5-8 in these Characteristics, but heroes start at 10.

**STrength** is your character's physical power and ability to lift and carry things. It also has a HTH Attack with a Normal BODY Roll of STR / 5, rounded off.

**DEXterity** is your character's reaction time, agility, grace and, well, dexterity. It also gives you an Initiative for combat.

**CONstitution** is how tough and healthy you character is. It also protects against being Stunned.

**INtelligence** is how quickly your character is able to perceive things. It is the basis of PERception Rolls.

**EGO** is your character's mental force of will and stability.

**PREsence** is how impressive your character is. High PREsence characters may inspire courage, terror, a desire to follow or the glamour of a skilled actor. Low PREsence characters are generally unimpressive and may not be taken seriously or as seriously.

**Combat Value (CV):** CV comes in Offensive and Defensive flavours. OCV is added to an 11- Success Roll to hit targets; the amount you roll under is the DCV you "Hit". That is, with an OCV of 5 and a roll of 9, you "hit"  $11 + 5 - 9$  a DCV of 7 or less. That's sufficient to hit NormalGuy, but Martial Arts Man won't be impressed.



There's also a Mental (MCV/OMCV/DMCV) flavour of CV. It's pretty much the same, except you're trying to hit them with your brain, and not in a literal sense.

**SPEED** is how many times you act, out of a twelve Segment Turn. Aside from that, don't worry about it; the book has a handy chart. Just mark down which Segments you can act (an Action Phase) and forget about it. The GM will call out "Anyone move in Segment 4?" and, if you have a "4" in your "Phases" list, say "Me!" and tell him your DEX. Done.

**DEFense** reduces damage. **PD** reduces Physical Damage, like punches, kicks, clubs and a softball upside the head. **ED** reduces Energy Damage, like fireballs, tasers or suddenly being hit with a cold blast. That is all Normal Damage. For Killing Damage, like bullets, swords, axes, disintegration beams, lightning strikes or lasers, there's **Resistant DEFenses** - **rPD** and **rED**. Resistant Defense is bought with the power of the same name.

**REcovery** is how much ENDurance and STUN you recover per Turn and how much BODY you regain per month.

**ENDurance** is fuel for your Powers - in HERO System terms, that includes anything from running, to punching someone in the face, to optic blasts to flying.

**BODY** is how close you are to death - Higher is better. If your character reaches "Negative BODY" - That is, the opposite of their total normal body - They die. Thus, if you've bought 14 BODY and your character reaches -14 BODY, they are dead. If your character reaches 0 BODY, they lose 1 BODY at the end of each Turn.

**STUN** is how close you are to being unconscious. High numbers are good; low numbers are bad. Losing more STUN from one attack than your CON means you have to spend a Phase recovering; running out of STUN means you're unconscious. Negative numbers means you're "More unconscious".

All characters have a base of 12 meters of **Running**, 4m of **Swimming** and 4m of **Leaping** (full forward and 1/2 upward).

You can sell off any Characteristic, down to 0 or 1 (generally).

## Skills

Essentially, buy a Success Roll for something. Buying CV for HTH or Ranged Combat, groups of weapons or a single weapon (OCV only) is also a skill. Buying MCV uses a different cost setup, but is essentially the same.

## Perks

Things it's nice to have, like Police Authority, Noble rank, Money, Contacts, Followers, Vehicles and Bases and etc..

## Talents

Almost sorta-Powers, all of which don't cost ENDurance. Things like Absolute Time Sense, Eidetic Memory (you don't forget), Striking Appearance (Beautiful, Ugly, Dangerous, Harmless, etc.), Ambidexterity, Deadly Blow, or Weapon Master...

## Martial Arts

Various maneuvers you can use to alter how you deal damage and what your attack does. OCV/DCV bonuses and penalties; Damage bonuses; different effects, such as Grabbing limbs or making the Target fall. You get default maneuvers which you can use with any weapon or hand-to-hand.

Maneuvers include everything from boxing to fencing to special forces training, or any kind of armed or unarmed combat skill. You can also buy Weapon Elements, to use your extra maneuvers with various weapons.

Martial Arts cost 3-5 Character Points per maneuver and, as a general rule, you should buy at least 10 Character Points worth.

## Powers

Powers are the special abilities of your character. They may be magical, divine, super-science or ordinary, everyday things, like an AK-47. Of course, that last is only ordinary and every-day for some people - And a larger number of characters.

What most Powers do can be simplified down to one of three categories: an Effect Roll (most Powers); an absolute effect (like Invisibility); or a value (like Flight, 20m).

The cost of a Power is increased with Advantages (Such as No Gravity Penalty +1/2) and decreased with Limitations (Such as OAF -1). To calculate, which only has to be done once, take the cost of a power and multiply it by 1 + Advantages. That's the Active Points (AP). Then, take the AP and divide it by 1 + Limitations. That's the Real Points (RP). That's what you pay. Most campaigns will limit how many AP a power can have.

**Flight 20m**, No Gravity Penalty (+1/2); OAF (Gravity Staff; -1)  $20 * 1.5 = 30 \text{ AP} / 2.0 = 15 \text{ RP}$ .

Or;

**Flight 20m**, Difficult To Dispel (x2 Active Points; +1/4), No Gravity Penalty (+1/2); OAF (Gravity Staff; -1), Costs END To Maintain (Full END Cost; -1/2), Incantations (-1/4)  $20 * 1.75 = 35 \text{ AP} / 2.75 = 12.72 = 13$ .

0.6-0.9 round up; 0.1 to 0.4 rounds down; 0.5 rounds in favour of the player.

Simple and done. There are shortcut charts in the rules which allow you to ignore most math, and if you don't want to do math at all, a 2-year Hero Designer contract gets you software which is point-and-click and does all the math for you. I've found it absurdly simple to use.

## Complications

Things that complicate your life (and you potentially draw strength from), like people you look out for, a negative reputation, physical and psychological complications (Blind In One Eye or Code Of Honor), social complications, being Hunted or having a Rivalry by/with someone, and so on.

**THE END. YES, THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT. THE REST IS GRAVY.**