

## Reference – Shadowrunning 101

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### Basics

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A shadowrunner is an expendable, deniable asset, an individual willing to commit crimes for money for anonymous employers.

There are several key basics that every shadowrunner needs to know.

- ❖ **Fixer** – Every team needs one or more fixers. A fixer is a guy who knows a guy. Fixers know who to talk to get gear, licenses, contracts, or anything else money can buy. All for a fee, of course. A shadowrunner without a good fixer will face tremendous challenges surviving in the underworld.
- ❖ **Mr. Johnson** – The men and women who hire shadowrunners thrive on anonymity and go by the name “Mr. Johnson.” A Mr. Johnson may be a freelance operative, a corporate employee, or an individual with a need for some illicit activity. He meets with shadowrunners, outlines the mission parameters, and arranges payment for services rendered. Mr. Johnson almost assuredly has his own best interests in mind and views the shadowrunners as expendable tools. A team generally knows a number of Mr. Johnsons or has fixers with many contacts.
- ❖ **Identity** – Shadowrunners are professional criminals who break laws, violate corporate territory, and make many, many enemies. Survival requires a “smoke screen” of lies, false trails, forged licenses, and fake identities. Most shadowrunners go by a street name or call sign. However, they also keep one or more fake identities other than their real selves.
- ❖ **Contacts** – Ability to shoot a gun or hack a computer are necessary skills, but the world of shadowrun is one of secrets and information. Success often pivots not on *what* you know but on *who* you know. Every good shadowrunner has some contacts in various lines of work from whom he can get information or favors, whether it be a beat cop, arms dealer, forger, mafia underboss, joygirl, or any other person who might be able to provide information useful in the underworld.
- ❖ **SIN** – A System Identification Number is registered to an individual and grants rights and privileges. However, it also allows tracking and identification. A shadowrunner does not want the drawbacks of being a SINner but wants the advantages. At the same time, he wants the advantages of being SINless but not the disadvantages. The best choice is to walk the line. A SINless shadowrunner usually purchases one or more fake SINs to go along with his fake identities. A SINless individual is considered to have no rights and may be treated in whatever manner desired when arrested. This often includes issuing of a “criminal SIN” tied to DNA records, biometrics, and other non-changeable records. A valid (but not necessary *your own*) SIN is necessary to obtain a job, rent an apartment, and even buy a bus ticket.
- ❖ **RFID Tagging** – Everything these days has an RFID tag. Stores use them to track inventory and thwart shoplifting. Tags broadcast advertisements, messages, and other information. Corporations implant employees, equipment, and other corp property. Being aware of RFID and knowing how to erase it is vital.
- ❖ **Extraterritoriality** – Mega-corporations make their own law on their territory; governments cannot touch them or enforce laws. Those caught doing illicit activities on corporate grounds are at their mercy, with no one to whom you can appeal.

### Runner Types

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There are six basic types of shadowrunner. Characters can be built that crossover some of these areas, but every character should have some sort of specialty.

- ❖ **Adepts** – These individuals channel the forces of magic into their bodies, enhancing their abilities to superhuman levels.
- ❖ **Faces** – These individuals are smooth-talking, charismatic, well-connected characters who excel in social situations. They negotiate better deals for their teams, talk their way past obstacles, and handle legwork and networking.
- ❖ **Hackers** – These computer gurus manipulate the Matrix using augmented reality (AR) or fully immerse themselves via virtual reality (VR).
- ❖ **Magicians** – These individuals use their will to manipulate magic and control spirits. There are two main traditions, the hermetic mage who thrives on knowledge and structure, and the shaman who is attuned to forces of nature.
- ❖ **Riggers** – These variant hackers use their computer skills to manipulate modern manned and unmanned vehicles. They often drive get-away vehicles, assault vehicles, or send in robot drones to do their dirty work.
- ❖ **Street Samurai** – With their implanted cyberware and bioware, the street samurai are living killing machines. If something, or someone, needs to get broken, the street samurai is your man.

## Health, Damage, and Recovery

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When breaking the law and instigating violence like a shadowrunner, getting injured is assured. Understanding damage and how to recover is vital.

**Stun Damage** – This is wear and tear on the body but not life threatening injury. Stun represents getting battered, bruised, and physically exhausted but does not require intensive medical treatment. Stun damage can be recovered by making a Body + Willpower (1 hour) Extended Test. The character must be resting or unconscious during the time, and each hit recovers one box of Stun damage.

**Physical Damage** – This is intensive damage, such as knife wounds, bullet wounds, burns, broken bones, and other traumatic damage. Physical damage can be recovered by making a Body x 2 (1 day) Extended Test. The character must be resting or unconscious during the entire time, and each hit recovers one box of Physical damage. A character cannot heal any Physical damage through rest until all Stun damage is healed.

See Shadowrunning | Health for a list of modifiers to health recovery rolls.

Obviously, recovering from injury is a slow process, so making plans to avoid injury in the first place is a good idea.

Individuals trained in healing can improve a character's condition. This is done through the First Aid skill (can be used in or immediately following combat) or Medicine (treatment performed by a trained professional).

**First Aid** – May be used on either Stun or Physical damage within 12 hours of suffering the injury. Make a First Aid + Logic (2) Test as a Complex Action taking a number of Combat Turns equal to the amount of damage the character is trying to heal (maximum equal to First Aid skill rating). Each hit over the threshold reduces one box of damage. Due to wound modifiers, it is often less efficient to perform First Aid on yourself.

**Medicine** – May be used on either Stun or Physical damage. Make a Medicine + Logic Test, and each hit adds +1 die to subsequent healing tests made through rest.

There are two additional ways to assist in or speed up healing: equipment and magic. A shadowrun team should have access to one or both of these methods.

**Medkits and Autodocs** – When a trained individual uses a medkit or autodoc to try and assist in healing, the device adds its First Aid or Medicine rating to the user's dice pool. If an untrained individual utilizes either, he can use the device's rating instead of his skill (which he doesn't have). With the proper equipment, anyone can be a moderately skilled healer.

**Heal** – This spell can quickly repair Physical (but not Stun) damage. It can repair up to the spell's Force in boxes of damage. The caster makes a Spellcasting Test, with each hit allowing one box to be healed. Hits can also be used to reduce the time (by 1 Combat Turn per hit) it takes to make the spell permanent. The Heal spell must be sustained twice its Drain Value in Combat Turns to become permanent. Thus, the more damage healed, the longer it takes for the magic to set in. A character may only benefit from one Heal spell per set of wounds.

**DocWagon** – DocWagon is first-class emergency medical response on a 24-hour on call basis. Holders of a DocWagon contract can count on a DocWagon team's arrival within 10 minutes of a call, and the team comes armed and ready for trouble. DocWagon will not respond to calls from within a mega-corporation's extraterritorial property.

## Edge

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Edge is a measure of the character's luck, favor of the powers that be, or other intangible ability that lets him beat the odds. Your Edge score measures how much this luck can affect the game.

You may spend edge, regain edge, and burn edge; however, your current edge and never be higher than your Edge score. You either use luck or lose it.

See Game Concepts | Edge for the benefits of using edge and how to regain it.

## Criminals (Other Than You)

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The world is rich in criminal activities and organizations the conduct such. It is inevitable that a shadowrunner cross paths, good or ill, with some of these groups.

- ❖ **Organized Crime** – Crime syndicates have been around for centuries. In the world of 2072, shadowrunners are likely to encounter the mafia, yakuza, triads, vory v zakone (Russian mob), seoulpa rings (Korean mob), ghost cartels (Central and South American cartels), and the Laesa (elven mafia).
- ❖ **Gangs** – From sprawl gangs, to mobile "go-gangs", to magic-hurling "wiz-gangs", groups of violent, rebellious individuals can be found in cities all over the world. Having friends in the right gang in the right territory can mean the difference between life and death. Some powerful or infamous gangs include the Ancients, the Cutters, the Blood Mountain Boys, the Crimson Crush, the Halloweeners, and the Spikes, to name but a few.
- ❖ **Organleggers** – Modern medicine can clone body parts for almost anyone given enough time and money. When short on either or both, body parts can still be had. Organleggers specialize in getting the right part for the right person, regardless of if their rightful owners are done with them! Not surprisingly, many ghouls are in the organlegging business. That which they cannot sell, they eat.

## HMHVV

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With the return of magic, the world changed on a fundamental level. Not only did humanity morph into new metatypes, plants and animals changed as well. In fact, creatures as small as bacteria and

viruses changed into magically-triggered strains. One of the most infamous is the Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus (HMHVV).

There is no cure for HMHV, and there are several strains which affect different metatypes in a variety of ways. The primary strain of HMHV is responsible for the creation of vampires (infected humans) and wendigos (infected orks). The virulent Krieger strain of HMHV is responsible for the creation of ghouls, blind flesh-eating humanoids.

## Addiction

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Life in the 2070s is often harsh, and addictive vices are plentiful. Technology has allowed the development of designer drugs, combat drugs, and drugs made of Awakened components that could not exist without magic. Datajacks, electronic computer ports interfacing with an individual's brain, has also led to development of computerized SimSense addictions. These Better-Than-Life chips allow the user to experience moods and sensations "recorded" from other people or experience sensations beyond human norm.

Some shadowrunners use drugs to enhance their combat abilities. This is especially common among sprawl gangers as well.

- ❖ **Example Drugs** – Bliss, cram, deepweed, jazz, kamikaze, long haul, nitro, novacoke, psyche, and zen.
- ❖ **Example Better-Than-Life (BTL)** – Dreamchips, moodchips, personafix, and tripchips.

## Augmentation

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Medicine in the 2070s is extremely advanced, allowing the merger of living and mechanical components as well as enhanced living material. Augmentation allows metahumans to perform feats normally far beyond regular capabilities.

- ❖ **Bioware** – Bioengineering is one of the latest waves of development. Bioware replaces natural living tissue with custom-grown tissue, adds new organs, or attaches to existing organs to make the body function in ways not naturally designed. Bioware is very expensive, but it looks more natural than cyberware and is not as destructive to the body and mind.
- ❖ **Cyberware** – Cybertechnology is now decades old and improving continuously. Cyberware is the process of replacing living tissue with mechanical components or adding electronic devices into the body. These devices utilize Direct Neural Interface (DNI) to make the item function seamlessly with the natural body. Cyberware can often be made to look somewhat natural or completely robotic, depending on the owner's tastes. Cyberware can include extremely unnatural implants, such as body armor, machinegun limbs, and so on.
- ❖ **Adept Powers** – Not every user of magic casts spells. An adept channels magic into his body to give himself powers and abilities far beyond human norm. These abilities allow the adept to compete with mechanically augmented metahumans.

## Spirits

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Spirits play an integral part of life in the 2070s, with magicians able to interact with the spirit world through mentor spirits and by summoning and binding. Spirits provide a normally invisible layer of security outside of normal reality. Magicians often summon spirits into the world and use them as warriors, guards, and minions.