

# MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS QUICK-START

Have you ever wanted to use amazing powers and skills to fight crime, protect people, and save the world? Now you can—with *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*! Using the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* Superhero Roleplaying game, you can create your own super hero and take your place amongst the legendary defenders of justice.

Powered by an award-winning game system, the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Hero's Handbook* provides you with everything you need to create your own fantastic superhero stories. Lavishly illustrated, the full-color, hardcover *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* contains hero creation and game play information, advice on creating your own adventures and series, and plenty of archetypes and examples to get you started.

## A STRONG FOUNDATION

The *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* game system is winner of multiple awards and has been the leading super-hero RPG for over a decade, built on the strong foundation of the d20 System and the Open Game License.

## EASY TO USE

Everything your hero does in *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* is resolved with a simple system of **action checks**: a twenty-sided die roll, plus or minus modifiers based on your hero's traits and the situation. Compare the result to a number that rates the difficulty and you immediately know if your attempt succeeded or failed, and by how much.

## HEROIC ACTION

*MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* uses **hero points** to give characters the opportunity to really pull out all the stops when it counts. Players can spend hero points to improve die rolls and help their heroes shake off damage. Hero points put the keys to success in the players' hands and give the Gamemaster a way to reward them for successful and heroic play.

## GET INTO THE GAME!

You don't have to wait to try out the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* game for yourself. This *Quick-Start* gives you everything you need to take the game out for a spin, complete with a super hero slugfest between the Rook, dark-winged detective of Emerald City, and his foe the mutant Pack-Rat!



# CHECK OUT MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS ON THE WEB AT MUTANTSANDMASTERMINDS.COM

# THE RULES

Games have rules, and *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* is no different in that respect. The essence of the game system that powers *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* is actually quite simple. The majority of the rules expand upon the core mechanics of the system, providing special-case rules or situational modifiers. So long as you understand the essentials of the game, you can handle just about any situation that comes up; just choose an appropriate type of check, a Difficulty Class, and make a roll to see if the character succeeds or not! It's that simple.

## RANK

Every trait in *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*—abilities, skills, powers, and so forth—has an associated **rank**, a value telling you how strong (or weak) that trait is. Ranks run from -5 (very weak) all the way up to 20 (cosmically capable) or more, with an average of 0. The Rook's Agility and Intellect, for example, are both rank 5, well above average and quite impressive for a human being.

## DIFFICULTY CLASS

Every task—from making an attack to avoiding harm to figuring out a gadget—has a **Difficulty Class** or **DC**, a number that tells you how hard that task is to perform. DCs range from 0 (automatic, so easy it's not worth rolling) to 40 (nearly impossible).

## CHECKS

Actions in *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* are all resolved through **checks**, a roll of a 20-sided die, plus a **modifier** derived from a character's ranks. If the total of the check *equals or exceeds* the Difficulty Class, the action is a success. If it doesn't, then it's a failure.

So, for example, an unarmed attack check for the Rook is his Fighting ability rank (8), plus his Close Attack advantage rank (7), for a total of 15, plus the result of a roll of the die. The DC he needs to get is the Parry of his target, plus 10 (21, in the case of Pack-Rat).

## DEGREES

Checks often have **degrees** of success or failure: Just rolling a success or failure counts as one degree. Every *five full points* a check result is over or under the difficulty class adds a degree of success or failure. Fractions are ignored. So DC 10 check with a result of 13 is one degree of success, just as a result of 8 is one degree of failure. A result of 16 is two degrees of success (6 over DC 10, ignoring the fraction) whereas a result of 5 is two degrees of failure (5 under DC 10).

## RESISTANCE CHECKS

Avoiding an effect requires a **resistance check**, with a Difficulty Class of the effect's rank plus 10 or 15 depending on the effect. A successful check means you avoid the effect, a failed check means you suffer some (or all) of the effect.

## CIRCUMSTANCE MODIFIERS

Some circumstances make checks easier or harder, resulting in a bonus or penalty to the check. Characters with a **circumstance bonus** are said to be at an **advantage** for the check, while those with a **circumstance penalty** are operating at a **disadvantage**. Apply a modifier of +2 if the character is at an advantage (+5 for a major advantage) and a modifier of -2 for a disadvantage (-5 for a major disadvantage).

## CHECK EXAMPLES

DIFFICULTY (DC)	EXAMPLE (TRAITS USED)
Very easy (0)	Notice something in plain sight (Awareness + Perception)
Easy (5)	Climb a knotted rope (Strength + Athletics)
Average (10)	Hear an approaching security guard (Awareness + Perception)
Tough (15)	Disarm an explosive (Intellect + Technology)
Challenging (20)	Swim against a powerful current (Strength + Athletics)
Formidable (25)	Climb a wet, slippery rock-face (Strength + Athletics)
Heroic (30)	Overcome a sophisticated security system (Intellect + Technology)
Super-heroic (35)	Convince the guards even though you have no credentials, they should let you into the building (Presence + Deception)
Nigh-impossible (40)	Track a trained commando through the jungle on a moonless night after 12 days of rainfall (Awareness + Perception)

## ACTION!

When things really start happening in a *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* game, time is broken down into segments called **rounds** (sometimes “action rounds”). A round isn’t very much time. Think of it like a page in a comic book, just long enough to go around the table once, with each character doing something. Each character’s portion of the round is called their **turn**.

On your turn, your character can move and do something else like make an attack or use a power. So, for example, on his turn, the Rook can run (or swoop through the air using his wings) and also throw a punch, use something from his arsenal, or some other action.

## MOVING

A normal person can move about 30 feet per turn (twice that if doing nothing other than moving), although some heroes and villains often have powers that allow them to move faster, like Rook’s glider wings or Pack-Rat’s animalistic speed.

## ATTACKING

*MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* characters can attack in various ways, from a simple punch to using weapons or amazing powers, but it’s all handled the same way: characters have an attack bonus, based off Fighting for close attacks and Dexterity for ranged attacks, modified by the character’s Close Combat or Ranged Combat skill, and the Close Attack and Ranged Attack advantages.

The Rook, for example, has Fighting 8 and the Close Attack 7 advantage, making him a *very* capable close combatant. He has a total bonus 15 when making a close attack. His Dexterity 5 and Ranged Combat: Throwing skill of 8 give him a bonus of 13 with ranged attacks like his throwing talons.

When making an attack, roll a check using the attack’s bonus against a Difficulty Class equal to 10 plus the target’s appropriate defense: Parry for close attacks, Dodge for ranged attacks. A check total (the die result plus the bonus) that equals or exceeds the DC is a success, while a total that is less than the DC is a failure.

## DAMAGE

An attack that hits causes **damage**, which is ranked like all other traits in *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*. Unarmed damage is based on Strength rank, while the damage caused by powers or weapons is based on the power or weapon rank.

A character hit by a successful attack can avoid some or all of the damage with a **damage resistance check**. This is a check of Toughness rank against a Difficulty Class equal to 15 plus the damage rank.

So, for example, if the Rook is resisting a shot from Pack-Rat’s blaster, his player rolls a check of the Rook’s Toughness against a DC of (Blaster’s Damage rank 8 + base difficulty 15) or 23. The Rook has the Defensive Roll advantage, so gets a +3 bonus to Toughness when able to move and roll with an attack, for a total of Toughness 6. Still, the Rook’s player needs to roll a 17 or better to take *no* damage from the hit.

The results of a damage resistance check are shown on the accompanying table:

## DAMAGE RESISTANCE CHECK

### TOUGHNESS VS. [DAMAGE RANK + 15]

**Success:** The damage has no effect.

**Failure (one degree):** The target is bruised and has a –1 circumstance penalty to further resistance checks against damage.

**Failure (two degrees):** The target is dazed until the end of their next turn, able to move or attack, but not do both. The target has a –1 circumstance penalty to further checks against damage.

**Failure (three degrees):** The target is staggered: able to move or attack, but not both, each turn, and moving at only half speed. The target has a –1 circumstance penalty to further checks against damage. If the target receives three degrees of failure on a Damage resistance check again, apply the fourth degree of effect.

**Failure (four or more degrees):** The target is incapacitated: knocked out and unable to act.

## HERO POINTS

Heroes have a resource called **hero points**, representing the determination and strength of spirit that helps them accomplish the impossible when they have to. The Game-master awards players hero points for facing difficulties in the game and generally behaving heroically. You can spend your hero points to do one of the following:

- Re-roll a die roll and take the better of the two rolls. If the second roll is a 10 or less, add 10 to it so the result is always 11–20.
- Immediately remove a dazed condition from damage, allowing your hero to act normally.

The *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Hero’s Handbook* describes many other uses for hero points, but these two are the essentials for this *Quick-Start*.



## THE ROOK

PL10

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
3	3	5	5	8	5	2	3

## POWERS

The Rook's costume gives him the following powers:

**Cowl:** Senses 3 (Extended Vision, Low-Light Vision, Radio; The Rook can see ten times further than normal, sees normally in dim light, and can pick up radio transmissions)

**Wings of the Rook:** Flight 5 (the Rook can soar through the air at a speed of 60 miles per hour), Movement 1: Safe Fall (the Rook can fall safely from any height, using his flight harness' anti-gravity effect to slow his fall)

## EQUIPMENT

The Rook carries a variety of crime-fighting equipment and weapons, including:

**Flashlight:** Able to illuminate dark areas.

**Mini-Tracers:** Emit a radio signal the Rook can track using his cowl.

**Arsenal:** A variety of collapsible and hidden weapons, including:

- **Explosive Talons:** Throwing weapons that do Damage rank 3 to all targets in a 30-foot radius.
- **Flash Bombs:** Release a brilliant flash of light; targets in a 30-foot radius make a Fortitude check (DC 13). Failure is a -2 penalty on checks involving vision. Two degree is a -5, while three or more leaves the target blinded. Make a new Fortitude check each round to recover.
- **Fighting Staff:** Close combat weapons that does Damage rank 5 (which includes the Rook's Strength).
- **Taser Talons:** Throwing weapons that force a target hit with one to make a Fortitude check (DC 14). Failure means dazed (able to move or attack, but not both). Two degrees of failure means stunned (no actions), while three degrees or more means the target is incapacitated and out of the fight. Make a new Fortitude check each round to recover.
- **Throwing Talons:** Throwing weapons doing Damage rank 5 (which includes the Rook's Strength).

**REAL NAME:** JACK COOPER

**OCCUPATION:** FORMER ENTREPRENEUR, CRIME FIGHTER

**BASE:** EMERALD CITY

Jack Cooper was born to a wealthy family and afforded every opportunity. He used his advantages to study, travel, and educate himself, eventually starting a valuable dotcom business that made him a personal fortune when he sold it before he was 30. Visiting Freedom City early in his "retirement," Jack happened to see the Freedom League in action, and was inspired particularly by the Raven, a hero who held her own against powerful foes with no super-powers whatsoever.

Later, when reading up on her, he came across a rare interview in which she said: "There's a lot of injustice in the world. There are a lot of... predators. I want to show people things can be better; that just because something is unfair today, doesn't mean it needs to be unfair forever. I want to live in a just world, so I work every day to make that a reality. I think we all do, in our own way."



## SKILLS

Acrobatics 3 (+8), Athletics 5 (+8), Intimidation 5 (+8), Investigation 1 (+6), Perception 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Throwing 8 (+13), Stealth 9 (+14), Technology 5 (+10), Treatment 1 (+6), Vehicles 1 (+6)

## ADVANTAGES

- Close Attack 7** The Rook has a +7 bonus to his close attacks (already included in his totals).
- Defensive Roll 3** The Rook has a +3 bonus to Toughness checks when able to move and react.
- Move-by Action** The Rook can move, take action, and then move again on his turn.
- Power Attack** You can take up to a -5 penalty on your attack checks to gain up to a +5 bonus on your attack's Damage rank. You must announce how much you want to use before you roll.
- Quick Draw** Drawing or preparing one of the weapons from your arsenal is not an action for you.

## OFFENSE

## INITIATIVE +5

Unarmed +15	Close, Damage 3
Fighting Staff +15	Close, Damage 5, Reach 1
Throwing Talons +13	Ranged, Damage 5

## DEFENSE

<b>DODGE</b>	14	<b>FORTITUDE</b>	8
<b>PARRY</b>	14	<b>TOUGHNESS</b>	6/3†
<b>WILL</b>	8	†Without Defensive Roll.	

The very next day, Jack Cooper went into his workshop and started designing himself a new life. He sought out the best trainers and teachers, and built himself a small arsenal of weapons, including his wings and cowl. When he was ready, the Rook hit the streets of Emerald City, to help make a just world a reality.

# PACK-RAT

PL11

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
1	4	4	5	4	6	3	1

### POWERS

**Claws and Teeth:** Close attack Damage 2 (which includes Pack-Rat's Strength).

**Ratlike:** Pack-Rat has ratlike traits, including Extra Limbs 1 (a prehensile tail), Immunity (to diseases), and Senses (an acute sense of smell and the ability to track with it). He can also run on all fours at about four times normal human speed (16 MPH)

**Blaster:** Pack-Rat carries a blaster of his own making that does Damage 8 at range.

### SKILLS

Acrobatics 6 (+10), Athletics 9 (+10), Close Combat: Claws 8 (+12), Deception 6 (+7), Expertise: Undercity 8 (+14), Perception 8 (+11), Sleight of Hand 8 (+13), Stealth 9 (+13), Technology 15 (+21)

### ADVANTAGES

**Defensive Attack** You can take up to a -5 penalty on your attack checks for a round to gain up to a +5 bonus on your Dodge and Parry ranks for that round.

**Defensive Roll 4** Pack-Rat has a +4 bonus to Toughness checks when able to move and react.

**Improved Initiative 2** When making initiative checks, Pack-Rat adds +8 to his Agility rank. (Already included in his Initiative total.)

**REAL NAME:** EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECT XCV-112890

**OCCUPATION:** THIEF AND GANG LEADER

**BASE:** THE UNDERCITY

Morgenstern Labs is just one of the many corporate fronts for the shadowy organization known as the Labyrinth. One of its special areas of experimentation was adapting the DNAscent technology for use on animal subjects, "uplifting" them to higher levels of intellect and tool-use. The secret research project produced a number of animal hybrids with human-level (or greater) intelligence.

Then an animal rights group heard rumors of Morgenstern's illicit testing. They thought they were merely vandalizing another in a long string of corporations guilty of torturing innocent animals for profit, learning painfully—fatally in a couple of instances—of their error when they



### OFFENSE

**INITIATIVE +12**

Claws and Teeth +12	Close, Damage 2
Blaster +13	Ranged, Damage 8

### DEFENSE

<b>DODGE</b>	13	<b>FORTITUDE</b>	8
<b>PARRY</b>	11	<b>TOUGHNESS</b>	8/4*
<b>WILL</b>	11	*Without Defensive Roll	

accidentally released specimens from their cages. Subject XCV-112890 ran and didn't look back, disappearing into the city sewers to freedom.

When he helped some vagabonds against a street gang, he gained allies and, eventually, control over a gang of his own. They named him "Pack-Rat" and helped him ferret out the books and sources of information he craved. He absorbed it all, showing a remarkable gift for kit-bashing and engineering. He has cautiously built his "Rat Pack" in the shadows and now intends to use his abilities to survive...and profit.

**NOW YOU KNOW THE RULES BASICS, AND HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO THE CHARACTERS... SO LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE !**

# RAT TRAP!

Now you get to play a short *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* encounter, pitting the hero the Rook against Pack-Rat! Give the Rook's character sheet to one player, while another player can run Pack-Rat or the Gamemaster can do so. Note that the character sheets are abbreviated and this basic encounter is meant to be a fairly straightforward fight. You can learn more about individual character abilities and advantages—and more detailed game-play—in the *Hero's Handbook*.

Go over the information in **The Rules** with the player(s) and give them the opportunity to look over the character sheets. You might want to have them make a few test die-rolls and checks to get the feel of it. When you're ready to begin, read the following aloud to the Rook's player:

*You're no stranger to dealing with crime in Emerald City, your home in the Pacific Northwest, but the latest series of thefts from high-tech companies like MarsTech and ASTRO Labs caught your attention, as they also involved the abduction of several scientists. It seems clear the kidnappers entered the buildings from below, possibly using access points from the city's old sewer system or underground. That is what led you to stalking through an abandoned corner of the under-city, to an old concrete supply bunker that dates back at least a century. You examine and test the rusting iron door, and find it unlocked.*

Ask the Rook's player to describe his arrival outside the bunker and how he is entering. Encourage the player to be descriptive and, in return, talk about the heavy layers of dust, the cracked and broken concrete, the rusting fixtures, and the stairs leading down into darkness.

You do not need to ask the player to make any checks at this time; sneaking into a dark ruin is a routine task for the Rook to say the least. Once the player has had a chance to talk a bit about what the hero does, give the player a token for a hero point and read the following:

*The inside of the bunker is dimly lit, but more than enough for the enhanced lenses in your cowl. In the middle of the cracked concrete floor sit four figures, back to back, heads slumped, their clothes covered in white lab-coats, spot-lit by the single flickering bulb hanging from a ceiling filled with rusting pipes.*

## I SMELL A RAT!

Have the Rook's player roll a Perception check (the Rook's total Perception skill bonus of 8, plus the roll of the die). If the total of the check equals or exceeds 23, Rook notices

Pack-Rat, hidden amongst the pipes in the ceiling, aiming his blaster at him! Roll for initiative, as described in the following paragraph. If not, Pack-Rat gets to roll one free attack against Rook: roll a check of his +13 bonus with his blaster against half of the Rook's usual Dodge level of 14 due to the surprise. This means Pack-Rat only needs a total of 17 or better to hit (a roll of 4 or better on the die)! If the attack hits, have the Rook's player roll a Damage Resistance Check using Toughness against DC 23 (15 + the blaster's Damage 8), as given in the Damage section. The Rook's bonus is only +3, since his Defensive Roll advantage does not apply while surprised.

## INITIATIVE

Either after the Rook spots Pack-Rat, or after Pack-Rat's attack, have each side roll the die and add their Agility rank; Pack-Rat adds his Agility rank +8 (+12 total) due to his Improved Initiative. The higher roll acts first, then the other, and back and forth.

On his turn, Pack-Rat shoots at the Rook with his blaster: +13 bonus against the Rook's Dodge of 14 (meaning Pack-Rat normally needs to roll an 11 or better to hit). When it's the Rook's turn, ask his player what the hero does, using the guidelines in **The Rules** and **Actions!** to determine the outcome.

If the Rook tries to disarm Pack-Rat (a smart maneuver), have his player make a normal attack check against Pack-Rat, but subtract 5 from the result, due to trying to hit the smaller target of Pack-Rat's blaster (or hand). If the attack succeeds, roll a test of the attack's Damage rank against a test of Pack-Rat's Strength of 3. If the Rook wins, Pack-Rat drops his blaster. If Pack-Rat wins, he holds on to it.

## MORE TROUBLE

The four "kidnapped scientists" are, in fact members of Pack-Rat's "Rat Pack" of henchmen, wearing the scientists' lab coats. Starting after Pack-Rat's second turn, they throw off the ropes "restraining" them and move to help their boss. Their traits are:

### RAT PACK THUGS

Strength 2, Attack +2 (close, Damage 3, club, or Damage 2, unarmed), Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 4, Toughness 2, Will 0, all other abilities 0.

Award the Rook's player another hero point for the additional complication of the thugs when they reveal themselves.

The thugs have billy clubs they initially attempt to beat the Rook with: roll d20 + 2 (their attack bonus) against the Rook's Parry defense (DC 24). Under normal circumstances they can only hit by rolling a 20 on the die (a roll



of 20 always hits). Once the thugs take action, they act each round after Pack-Rat.

Fortunately for the Rook, the thugs are minions: so he can choose to hit them as a routine action (adding 10 to his normal attack modifier, more than enough to hit the thug's Defense of 12) and any thug failing a resistance check is automatically out of the fight!

## DARK WINGS

For the rest of the fight, Pack-Rat tries to stay out of the Rook's reach, taking shots at him, while the thugs try to hit him with their clubs. Run the fight until the Rook defeats the villains or loses to them. If the latter happens, Pack-Rat may leave the Rook bound with the same ropes used to "hold" his men, setting crude explosives to destroy the

bunker. Tell the Rook's player he wakes up just in time to try and escape from the ropes (a DC 20 Dexterity check, but he gets a +5 circumstance bonus if he uses one of his talons to cut loose). He can then disarm the explosives with a DC 20 Technology skill check or escape in the nick of time with a DC 20 Athletics skill check. Failing both of those means the Rook is caught in the explosion; he survives, but needs to be rescued by his teammates from the Sentinels, and will require days of recuperation before he's able to see action again.

In either case, what happened to the abducted scientists? Why is Pack-Rat kidnapping them and stealing technology? That's an opportunity for you to continue the adventure, Gamemaster, once you've gotten your hands on the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* rulebook and have a chance to get a whole group of heroes together!

## NEXT ISSUE...

Now that you've had a chance to try *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*, your next step is the *Hero's Handbook*. This is the game's core rulebook and the real beginning of your super-heroic adventures: You can make your own characters and create legends!

### MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS HERO'S HANDBOOK

Join the never-ending battle for truth and justice in the world's finest super hero universe, using the world's greatest super hero roleplaying game!

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Experience super hero adventure in the world that helped define the genre: Become a hero of legend with the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Hero's Handbook*!

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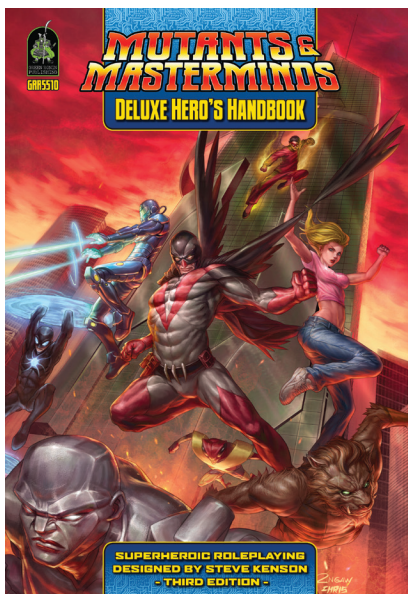
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The *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* is the revised and expanded core rulebook of the game's Third Edition and it gives you everything you need to have your own super-heroic adventures:

- A flexible and powerful system for creating the hero you want to play.
- A huge variety of super powers, skills, and advantages to choose from and customize.
- A core system that emphasizes action and uses only a single 20-sided die.
- Integrated rules for gadgets, vehicles, and headquarters.
- Ready-to-play archetypes and a Quickstart Character Generator if you want to get to the action even faster.
- Advice for Gamemasters on creating and running your own adventure series.
- Introductions to M&M's premier settings, Emerald City and Freedom City.
- Two introductory adventures, *Ghost Town* by Seth Johnson and *Time of the Apes* by Christopher McGlothlin.

So what are you waiting for? Choose your powers. Put on your mask. Fight the forces of evil and...

# SAVE THE WORLD!



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## MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS QUICK-START

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