

GAMMA HEROES

House Rules for Superhero Games

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Many players of *D&D Gamma World* have noted that the game isn't much different from a superhero roleplaying game; the origins and powers are quite similar to those found in superhero comic books.

These house rules tell how to adapt the *D&D Gamma World* rules to use in a contemporary setting as a campaign of superheroes.

Origins

Roll randomly for one origin as in *D&D Gamma World*, and then choose another origin to complement that origin. Then select which of those two origins is going to be your primary origin and which will be your secondary origin.

If you have *Famine in Far-Go*, you can roll on that table and pick from those origins as well.

Engineered Humans

The engineered human origin is very common in a *Gamma Heroes* game, as it represents anyone who doesn't have actual super-powers but instead relies upon training, intellect, or gadgets.

You can select engineered human as either your primary or your secondary origin. You can choose a different primary ability score, instead of Intelligence, if you'd like. Your *tech affinity* trait is replaced by the following:

High-Tech Hero (Level 1): Whenever you can select an Alpha Stunt, you can choose to gain a permanent Omega Tech item instead.

Starting Level and Experience

In a *Gamma Heroes* game, your level is an indication of your hero's innate power level. Starting levels are based on the power level that your Game Master (and fellow players) wish to play.

The default starting level in *Gamma Heroes* is level 5; this assumes that

you're all competent, trained heroes who know how to use your powers. If you want to play younger or less skilled heroes, start at level 3; heroes who are brand new to their powers can start at level 1, probably in some kind of academy for gifted youngsters.

Higher level characters are those with a lot of experience and power, and are expected to do even more for society; after all, with great power comes great responsibility. To play a high-powered *Gamma Heroes* campaign, start at level 8 or 9.

Experience levels are gained more slowly in *Gamma Heroes*; heroes tend to stay around the same power level for a longer time. Use the following advancement chart instead of the chart from *D&D Gamma World*:

Total XP	Level	Benefit	Alpha Stunts
0	1st	Origin traits, both novice powers	1
1,000	2nd	First critical hit benefit	2
2,250	3rd	First utility power	3
3,750	4th	Second Alpha Stunt per encounter	4
5,500	5th	First expert power	5
7,500	6th	Second critical hit benefit	6
10,000	7th	Second utility power	7
13,000	8th	Third Alpha Stunt per encounter	8
16,500	9th	Second expert power	9
20,500	10th	Uber feature	10

Uber Feature

At 10th level, you gain your choice of one Uber feature, selected from the following list:

- ☹ Choose one of your origin expert powers. You can use that power one additional time each encounter.
- ☹ Choose one of your origin utility powers. You can use that power additional time each encounter.
- ☹ Choose a novice power from an origin that you don't have. You can use that power once per encounter.
- ☹ Choose one of your Alpha Stunts. You automatically have it readied at the start of each encounter, it can't be unreadied by an Alpha Flux, and it doesn't count against your limitation of Alpha Stunts you can use each encounter.
- ☹ You gain an additional permanent Omega Tech item of your choice.
- ☹ Once per encounter, take an additional standard action on your turn as a free action.

Identity and Occupation

Do you have a secret identity or a public one? Are you a well-known hero or a mysterious urban legend? You get to choose; at the very least, come up with a superhero name and a real name for yourself (if they're not the same).

Instead of rolling randomly to determine which skill gets a +4 bonus, choose a skill appropriate to your hero's background and history. Or you can instead pick a profession from the [Random Professions Table](#).

Based on your character's background, you might live in a stately manor or a simple apartment; you could be rich or you could be poor. Decide what your living conditions and economic status are like; it won't affect your game stats, but it will shape how you roleplay.

You can generally assume that you'll have whatever normal items you need, assuming they're reasonable and fit your background. You can also generally assume that such items aren't going to be that useful in fighting crime. Most superheroes don't simply phone the police on their cell phones when spotting a super-criminal, nor do they regularly need 10 days of rations.

Weapons and Armor

Use the following charts for unarmed and weapon attacks, instead of the chart given in *D&D Gamma World*. Don't use the standard rules on ammunition; assume you have enough ammunition for any weapon you carry.

Light Weapons (use Dex or Int)	Accuracy	Damage	Range
Unarmed, quick	+4	1d10	
Melee, one-handed	+3	1d8	
Melee, two-handed	+2	1d12	
Ranged, one-handed	+3	1d8	10
Ranged, two-handed	+2	1d12	20

Heavy Weapons (use Str or Con)	Accuracy	Damage	Range
Unarmed, powerful	+3	2d6	
Melee, one-handed	+2	1d10	
Melee, two-handed	+1	2d8	
Ranged, one-handed	+2	1d10	10
Ranged, two-handed	+1	2d8	20

Instead of the normal armor types in *D&D Gamma World*, decide if you depend upon dodging attacks in your sleek superhero costume, or if you

rely upon your natural toughness to protect you. Use the following chart to determine which is best for you:

Armor Type	Benefit
Skintight costume (light armor)	+2 armor bonus to AC (add your Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier to your AC), +2 armor bonus to Reflex
Invulnerability (heavy armor)	+4 armor bonus to AC (add your Strength or Constitution modifier to your AC), +2 armor bonus to Fortitude

Invulnerability, unlike other heavy armor types, does not reduce your speed – but you might not be able to use some powers or traits if they require that you not be wearing heavy armor. For example, a Speedster's *blinding speed* trait only applies when wearing light or no armor.

Alpha Stunts

When building a character, select a number of Alpha Mutation cards equal to your level. These are your potential Alpha Stunts you can play during a combat. You can only pick Alpha Stunts that match the power source (Bio, Dark, or Psi) for your primary and secondary origins. Choose powers which complement your character's concept and theme.

Alpha Stunts don't begin an encounter readied; on your turn, as a free action, you can ready one Alpha Stunt for use. Once readied, the Alpha Stunt stays readied for the entire encounter, until you take a short or extended rest.

The maximum number of Alpha Stunts you can ready during an encounter depends on your level. Level 1 through 3 characters can ready one; level 4 through 7 characters can ready two; and level 8 or higher characters can ready three Alpha Stunts per encounter.

You can roll to overcharge your readied Alpha Stunts as normal for *D&D Gamma World*.

Example: The player of Cerebriac-12, a level 5 Alien/Prescient, sees her character as being really smart, almost to the point of obnoxiousness, and able to figure out nearly any mystery. Plus, she has antennas. She chooses the following Alpha Stunts: *Super Genius*, *Know-It-All*, *Duality*, *Object Reading*, and *Death Reading* (all Psi).

Another Example: Blast Boy, a level 7 Radioactive/Exploding character, picks these Alpha Stunts: *Pants on Fire*, *Shimmershield*, *Hands of Power*, *Neutron Emission*, *Explode!* (all Dark), *Teleportation* (Psi), and *Levitation* (Psi).

Alpha Flux

If you roll a 1 on any d20 roll, you experience an Alpha Flux. All of your currently readied Alpha Stunts become unreadied. For each card unreadied this way, you can ready an additional Alpha Stunt during this encounter.

Omega Tech

You possess one item of permanent Omega Tech that's yours; you never have to worry about it running out of power or failing Omega Charge checks. If it's listed as consumable, you can resupply by taking a short or extended rest.

Choose an item appropriate for your character's concept. As usual, you can use the power of an Omega Tech card once per encounter.

Salvage

If an Omega Tech card has a salvage entry, you can use that item all the time as if you'd salvaged it, and then once per encounter you can use its special power. You don't need to be any particular level to use the salvaged version of the item, no matter what the salvage entry says.

Example: Cerebriac-12 chooses a *Freeze Ray*. This gives her a two-handed light weapon to use most of the time (ranged 20, Dex/Int, +3 accuracy; 2d8 force damage), and once per combat she can use the *Freeze Ray's* encounter power.

Engineered Humans

If you're playing an Engineered Human character, you can opt to choose Omega Tech instead of Alpha Stunts. For each Alpha Stunt card you choose not to take, you can instead select an additional Omega Tech card.

Example: Shadow-of-the-Owl, a level 6 Hawkoid/Engineered Human hero, decides to forgo his normal allotment of Alpha Stunts, taking only *Accelerated Reflexes* (a Bio power). He then chooses *Enviro-mask*, *Enviro-cape*, *Science Comp*, *Portacomp*, and *The Patch II*.

Rewards

Characters in a *Gamma Heroes* game receive experience at the normal rate based on the monsters you defeat and any quests you might complete. As noted earlier, you level slower and require more experience points to gain a level.

Omega Tech, Ancient junk, and ammo are not given out as rewards in

Gamma Heroes. Villains' high-technology items are invariably designed to only be used by them, superheroes don't need to gather up bits and pieces of trash from modern society, and the ammunition rules aren't used.

Campaign Setting

The default setting for *Gamma Heroes* is early 21st Century Earth. In this setting, the Big Mistake did happen in 2012 – but instead of totally fracturing reality, it just changed a small percentage of people (the heroes and their super-powered opponents) to give them fantastic superhuman powers.

The Big Mistake didn't just affect the present; it also generated fissures in the time-space continuum that granted powers to some people in the past, too, altering the timeline. Most of these individuals chose to keep their powers hidden, acting in secret and behind the scenes – but with the advent of the Big Mistake itself and very public displays of superhuman powers around the world, those secret heroes and villains are now able to act more freely.

Of course, if your Game Master wants to change any of the setting details, that's her or his option. Maybe super-powers don't originate with the Big Mistake and have been around forever. Maybe there have been superheroes acting openly in public since the 1930s. Check with your GM for the types of adventures she or he wants to run in *Gamma Heroes*.

Opponents: Game Master Advice

With a little reflavoring, most "monsters" in *D&D Gamma World* and *Famine in Far-Go* can be used as villains in *Gamma Heroes*. A badder steading guard could be a human thug with a rifle. A human bitten by a radioactive snake could be represented by a menarl slime spitter.

For additional super-villains, [apply character origins as templates to existing monsters](#) to make them elites. Repeat the process with a second origin to make very powerful solos who can take on entire groups of heroes!