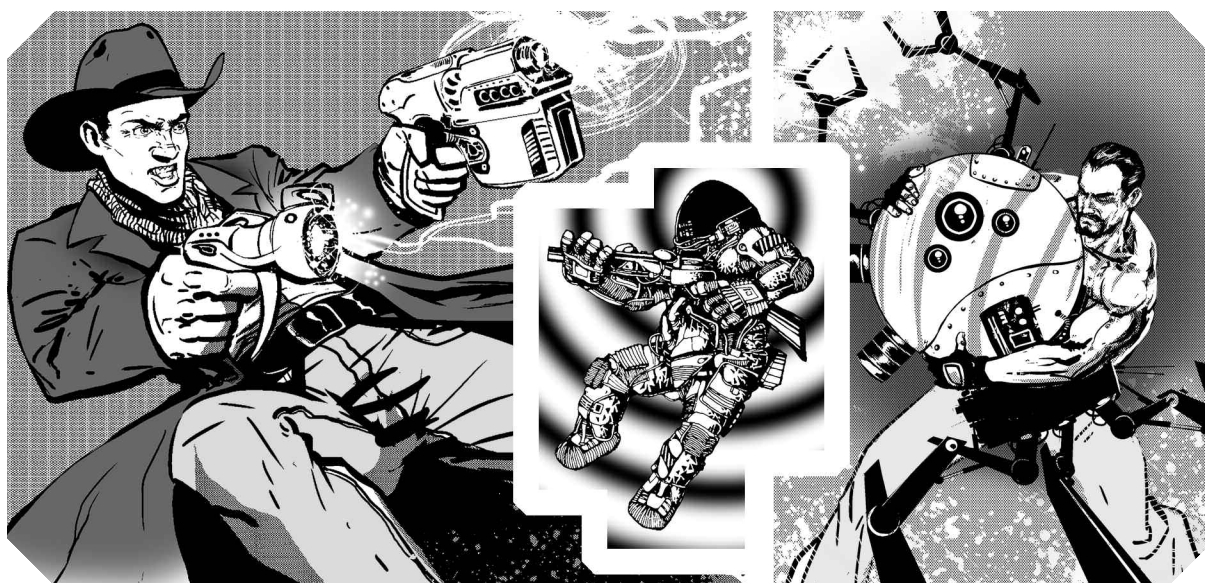


GURPS®

Fourth Edition

TRANSHUMAN SPACE

MARTIAL ARTS 2100™



Written by **PHIL MASTERS**

Edited by **NIKOLA VRTIS**

Editorial Assistance by **JASON "PK" LEVINE**

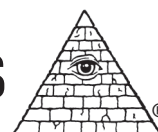
Illustrated by **RICHARD MATHER, ROD REIS, and DAN SMITH**

An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-6713

Version 1.0 – October 2011



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3	2. MARTIAL ARTISTS. . . .	10	Countermech Training.	24
Using This Book.	3	ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES,		<i>Il Ballo di Salute</i>	25
Publication History	3	AND SKILLS	10	Freefighting.	26
About the Author	3	Advantages	10	Hishōjutsu ("Flight Art")	26
1. MARTIAL ARTS IN		Perks	11	Margaretian Karate	26
THE 21ST CENTURY. . . .	4	Cinematic Elements	12	<i>Derived Styles</i>	27
THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY	4	Disadvantages.	13	Martian Swordplay	28
The Fitness Arts	4	Skills	14	Military Zero-G.	28
Self-Defense	5	<i>Retreating in 3D</i>	14	Remote Sniping	29
Full-Contact Sports	5	TECHNIQUES	15	Sact	30
THE COMING OF		New Techniques	15	Shan Chuan	
THE VIRTUAL ARTS	5	NONHUMAN PHYSIOLOGY	15	(Killer Fist Kung Fu)	30
Military Training Regimes.	5	3. NEW AND CHANGED		Zhua.	31
Fast Prototyping in the Dojo.	6	STYLES.	18	<i>Rival "Martian" Styles</i>	31
<i>The Quest for</i>		STYLE CHOICES IN 2100	18	4. NEW WEAPONS	
<i>the Ultimate Style</i>	6	Legal Concerns.	19	AND EQUIPMENT	32
THE STATE OF PLAY IN 2100	7	Off Earth.	20	WEAPONS	32
Fitness, Self-Defense,		NEW LENSES	20	<i>Martial Arts and</i>	
and Show.	7	<i>Finding a Teacher</i>	21	GURPS Ultra-Tech	33
Combat Sports	7	NEW STYLES	22	ARMOR AND TRAINING GEAR	34
<i>Derived Fictional Arts</i>	8	ARC-P	22	SOFTWARE	35
Police and Military Doctrines	8	Bantu Boxing (Bantujutsu)	22	<i>Recreating Lost Styles</i>	36
<i>Famous Masters in 2100</i>	9	Battledress Training.	23	INDEX	38
The Importance of Mars	9	Cocerdelmi	24		

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. **GURPS** continues to grow – see what's new at gurps.sjgames.com.

e23. Our e-publishing division offers **GURPS** adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on e23! Just head over to e23.sjgames.com.

Pyramid (pyramid.sjgames.com). Our monthly PDF magazine includes new rules and articles for **GURPS**, systemless locations, adventures, and much more. Look for each themed issue from e23!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. To discuss **GURPS** with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The web page for *Transhuman Space: Martial Arts 2100* can be found at transhuman.sjgames.com/martialarts2100.

Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book's web page and look for the "Bibliography" link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

GURPS System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
Transhuman Space Line Editor ■ PHIL MASTERS
e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH

Managing Editor ■ PHILIP REED
Art Director ■ SAMUEL MITSCHKE
Page Design ■ PHIL REED and JUSTIN DE WITT
Production Artist & Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Prepress Checker ■ MONICA STEPHENS

Marketing Director ■ PAUL CHAPMAN
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON
GURPS FAQ Maintainer ■
VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO

INTRODUCTION

Martial arts might seem like an irrelevance in the world of *Transhuman Space*. Why spend years training to throw slightly more powerful punches when a dozen different high-tech weapons are available to do much more damage? Why discipline your body and mind when biomods are available to enhance the former and nanodrugs can adjust the latter any way you want? Why burrow into the subcultures of ancient combat forms when you can find a thousand exotic and satisfying memeplexes on the global Web?

Yet, the martial arts survive for several very good reasons. Advanced training provides proven, often satisfying routes to discipline and physical fitness, without the expense of other methods, the problem of finding a reputable clinic or doctor, or the risks to the sense of self that come with quick high-tech self-modification. Martial-arts training can teach *focused* aggression and efficient crisis response. High-tech spacecraft, domed off-Earth communities, and underwater bases still depend on reliable sealing and somewhat fragile technologies to keep their occupants alive; even governments with a tolerant attitude toward weaponry tend to restrict the possession of powerful sidearms in such places. Moreover, they have the full support of the inhabitants, and can enforce the ban with advanced technologies. Unarmed combat thus may be the only legal or available way of settling violent personal conflicts such locations.

Furthermore, not all martial arts are concerned with *unarmed* combat, especially as the term is used in *GURPS Fourth Edition*. Many teach how to use the technologies of combat as precisely and efficiently as possible, so that the development of new technologies inspires the creation of new arts.

Finally, the martial arts remain popular in the entertainment business in 2100, as heroes who win through superior skill look better than those who depend entirely on technology do. This has created countless job openings for stuntmen, fight arrangers, and motion-capture models. These jobs are eminently suitable for certain PCs, who may need a source of honest income and an excuse to wander the world between adventures.

USING THIS BOOK

This supplement is concerned with martial arts in the world of *Transhuman Space* in Fourth Edition terms. Using it therefore requires the current edition of *GURPS Martial Arts*, the *Basic Set*, and the *Transhuman Space* main book, and preferably *Transhuman Space: Changing Times* for general guidance on running *Transhuman Space* games under Fourth

Edition. The text also makes reference to other *Transhuman Space* supplements, although none of these are mandatory.

In addition, a couple of the “gun arts” in this supplement use techniques and perks that can be found in either *GURPS High-Tech* for Fourth Edition, *GURPS Gun Fu*, or *GURPS Tactical Shooting*, so access to one of those is required to use those styles. A few perks that first appeared in *Gun Fu* are reprinted in Chapter 2 of this supplement for the convenience of readers who only have access to *High-Tech*. In any case, *Gun Fu* is highly recommended to anyone who wants to include wilder cinematic gun arts in their *Transhuman Space* campaigns, while *Tactical Shooting* would be very useful to anyone looking to focus on more realistic gunplay.

*You were prizefighting. “Misty Steele,”
augmented featherweight. Eight fights, I
made book on five of ‘em. Blood matches,
sweetmeat. Illegal.*

– William Gibson,
Mona Lisa Overdrive

PUBLICATION HISTORY

Several of the styles detailed here, and some parts of the background notes, originally appeared in Third Edition form in the 2004 *Pyramid* article “Transhuman Martial Arts,” by Peter V. Dell’Orto and Werner H. Hartmann. It’s been a pleasure to bring them into line with the new edition. In addition, a number of things in this supplement – especially style descriptions and concepts – previously appeared in Third Edition *Transhuman Space* supplements; these are referenced where appropriate.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phil Masters is the *Transhuman Space* line editor and author of *Changing Times* and other material for the line. In addition to a lot of *GURPS* material dating back to *Arabian Nights*, he has written a number of e23 products, including a couple of books for the *Dungeon Fantasy* series. He lives in Britain with his wife and the usual couple of computers, which know better than to talk back to him.

Additional Material: Peter Dell’Orto, S.A. Fisher, Werner H. Hartmann, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and Hans-Christian Vortisch

Playtesters: Frederick Brackin, Roger Burton West, Peter Dell’Orto, Shawn Fisher, Leonardo Holschuh, and William Stoddard

GURPS, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. *Transhuman Space*, *Martial Arts 2100*, *Pyramid*, e23, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *Transhuman Space: Martial Arts 2100* is copyright © 2011 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author’s rights is appreciated.

CHAPTER ONE

MARTIAL ARTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

"He's catching up!" I thought, "When will the cops get here?" "ETA for the nearest patrol team is four minutes," Yarrow, my wearable, responded to my accidental subvocalization. It wasn't information I really wanted. I'd come to this unstable Third Wave hole prepared for trouble from interviewees, and I'd factored all that into my negotiations and preparations. Then I'd gone for a walk at dusk without thinking about random local street hooligans or lousy police response times. The local cops would probably react quite appropriately when they found a rich visitor beaten up or dead – assuming that the embassy chose to make a fuss, which they would, even though they didn't like me much. But that wouldn't do me much good right now, and my pursuer looked to be too hopped up on dubious nanodrugs to care about the future.

"You can handle this," said Yarrow. "Remember your training."

"Training? I took some dance classes!"

"Classes that we chose quite carefully. And the VR follow-up course was designed for this sort of situation. Now, turn and focus."

The willful thing had borrowed my VR sensei's voice, so I responded automatically. It scanned my pursuer as he approached, and helpfully outlined the heavy stick he was hefting in his right

hand with glowing red lines, which ran up his arm so that his wrist was centered.

"Target, balance, and – kick!" Yarrow commanded, briskly but calmly, and my muscle memory cut in. I guess I had the advantage of surprise, because the stick went flying. The thug looked shocked, and the red lines snapped out. Then the thug reached for me, and I scrabbled backward, avoiding the hold. An orange circle appeared in my vision over his gut, and I kicked for that, connecting again. He gasped, and the target marker flickered, triggering an instinctive second kick.

"Now run!" Yarrow instructed, and I didn't need telling twice. "He's wearing a box, so forget the groin if he does catch up," Yarrow stated as I ran, "try for the eyes." But either I'd winded the thug enough, or he decided to go find easier meat, because I made it to the street where my hotel was located without seeing him again. The cops showed up as I reached the door, accepted the images that Yarrow sent them, and then took off, probably to find a bar somewhere. I staggered back to my room, while Yarrow told the mini-bar to pour me a drink.

Martial arts weave through the histories of conflict and recreation, adapting and being adapted as the world turns. This has been as true in the hundred years leading up to 2100 as in any earlier period.

THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

In the first decades of the third millennium, martial arts developed in three distinct directions.

THE FITNESS ARTS

The largest, and commercially most successful, of these three branches was the amalgamation of various martial-art techniques and styles with moves from aerobic and dance classes. This resulted in the creation of what would later become known as "fitness arts." Practitioners of these styles were (and are) primarily interested in the workout effects of their training, wasting little to no thought on self-defense – though there were some tragic cases of delusional belief in the

actual combat value of someone's chosen style. A related set of "arts" were in fact primarily meditative disciplines, teaching mental focus and self-control; these could be genuinely useful at best, emotionally satisfying at the minimum.

This all led to the appearance of a plethora of what *appeared* to be new arts and styles, although most of these were simply trademarked names for perfectly serviceable but not particularly coherent or integrated fitness training curricula. Fashions in such things came and went, and on occasion, some more dedicated students progressed to more serious combat arts, or at least seriously competitive sports. Mostly, however, the fitness arts separated completely from anything recognizable as martial arts.

SELF-DEFENSE

The second major branch of martial-arts evolution was somewhat classical: self-defense. Especially in areas with a strong tradition of strict gun control, many citizens felt the need to learn some ways to protect themselves against physical violence. As in the latter half of the 20th century, most dojos drew paying customers by offering a variety of quick and dirty (or often just quick) self-defense courses. These in turn were derived from certain techniques of the dojo's "main" martial arts (often some form of Karate, Jujutsu, Tae Kwon Do, Hapkido, Escrima, Muay Thai, or Wing Chun, with the Self-Defense lens from *GURPS Martial Arts*, p. 145). Serious practitioners of traditional martial arts still existed, and often made their living by teaching those self-defense

People used to ask me how I became a combat artist and why I'm called the Artificial Kid. People stopped asking such prying questions after I ruthlessly beat them up.

*– Bruce Sterling,
The Artificial Kid*

courses, but new styles of any significance were not developed in this environment.

FULL-CONTACT SPORTS

Invention and creativity of a sort, however, could be found in the third important area of martial-arts development in the early 21st century: full-contact blood sports. Born out of the Muay Thai and mixed martial arts bouts of the 1990s, such "meatfights" became popular all over the globe up to 2020 and in the early years of the subsequent decade – even if they were still illegal in many areas. Since many fighters in those days came from a criminal and/or streetfighting background, the "creativity" shown in their fights was of a rather primal and brutal sort, thus keeping the lessons from those tournaments out of any "real" dojo for decades to come.

Some of those techniques came full circle during the 2020s, 2030s, and 2040s, when civil unrest and wars in various parts of the world – but especially in Central Africa – saw the reintroduction of those brutal fighting maneuvers to the urban battlefields of the 21st century. Close combat skills were still largely irrelevant in real warfare, but in unstable insurgency situations, undisciplined street fights, and the personal entourages of thuggish warlords, a willingness and ability to batter opponents to a pulp with bare hands could be a real advantage. Meanwhile, even when global politics grew a little more stable and law enforcement grew more experienced at suppressing illegal contests, the meatfights survived, right up to 2100, with skill still serving some purpose alongside raw toughness and appropriate biomods.

Less brutal noncontact and minimal-contact combat sports were still around at this time, and some were quite popular. However, they mostly hadn't changed or developed much since the 20th century. They would later fade away almost entirely; see *Combat Sports* (pp. 7-8).

THE COMING OF THE VIRTUAL ARTS

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world, more sophisticated military organizations were beginning to make their own contributions to the development of martial arts in a broader sense. In wealthy, advanced countries, armies increasingly sought to substitute high technology and advanced training for numbers and raw firepower. In extreme cases, these systems of training went beyond simple skill instruction to a structured formality comparable to almost any martial art. Behind this lay an even more fundamental development, again emerging from new technologies; refinements in AI and virtual reality now permitted whole new ways of developing, teaching, and adapting systems of skill.

Then, between 2040 and 2080, dozens of new styles seemed to appear all across the solar system, though only a handful of them were really successful. The obvious triggers for this were radical, often technologically driven developments in society, especially manned space travel, the colonization of deadly environments with nonstandard gravitation, and life in small, pressurized habitats. Indeed,

many of these new styles were born out of social and political unrest, mainly on Mars and beyond. The Ares conspiracy, the appearance of the Duncanites, and the bloody history of the Martian Triads are the most widely known of these points of conflict.

MILITARY TRAINING REGIMES

Perfectly logically, the first people to apply new technologies to the arts of violence were the military, who had both the need and the budget. Intensive analysis by staff officers with access to hours of recordings of combat situations and computer modeling of tactical problems produced specific and complex – often *too* specific and complex – proposals for systems of training. With virtual reality now the norm in military training, these proposals could be implemented and refined within weeks or even days – and modified just as quickly if they proved imperfect.

The stress for some troops could sometimes be considerable, but the best-trained “virtual veterans” became experts in a startling range of problem-solving methods.

FAST PROTOTYPING IN THE DOJO

The civilian world wasn’t too far behind the military – and the most committed teachers and combat scholars brought a great deal of ingenuity to the topic. Not only could virtual reality model all manner of combat situations and facilitate training, modern somatic modeling software could actually analyze skill use down at the level of individual muscles and joints.

In short, martial arts moved into the realm of computer-aided design. Specialist software allowed whole martial-arts styles to be designed and redesigned in virtual space before

being tested in action, and AI aides could talk the tester-stylists through the process of learning and deploying the new ideas. Traditionalist martial-arts masters might disdain this “hasty and fantastical” approach – many of the systems developed this way proved to be ineffective, inefficient, or just unremarkable – but over time, some genuinely new and interesting ideas came out of the VR dojos.

Hence, although many of the styles developed to deal with new extraterrestrial environments were created by people who were on the spot, working through old-fashioned, painful trial and error, others came from either keen army training specialists or interested martial-arts masters working with VR programmers and biomechanics experts. Furthermore, the analysis software made cross-fertilization between new styles and ideas significantly simpler to manage. For a while, the solar system seemed to be experiencing a golden age of martial-arts development.

The Quest for the Ultimate Style

The culmination of the VR analysis trend, around the 2080s, was a serious and systematic attempt to formulate the “perfect style.” Actually, there were several separate attempts, but they all had a lot in common. The pattern was to apply the best computers and software available to the largest possible set of recordings of real combat – thousands of hours at minimum. This equipment analyzed what worked and what didn’t, mapped that onto actual tactics via physiology and weapon-expert systems, and fine-tuned the resulting style using simulated VR combat. It ultimately exploited teaching technology (including mnemotropic drugs, VR, and the young science of memetics) to generate a maximally effective teaching regime.

This approach was by no means a total failure; it produced some useful synthetic styles and some formidable martial artists. However, it didn’t actually render all previous martial-arts study redundant, despite the hopes of its proponents. For a start, the styles it generated were often *difficult*, occasionally verging on being impossible to learn properly. To become as effective as the experts, a student had to master a significant set of techniques (though not too many – inefficient moves were deliberately eliminated, after all). He had to internalize them, instinctively triggering the optimum response to any given move by an opponent. The high-tech training regimes were supposed to resolve this problem; instead, they made learning the styles expensive and stressful.

Furthermore, soon after most of these “ultimate” styles were developed, rival trainers began developing counters to them, designed to exploit the gaps left by their single-minded devotion to efficiency and to trigger responses that left the fighter open to specific follow-up attacks. This was nicknamed the “rock-paper-scissors” problem: A given approach could often be defeated by a specific counter-pattern that in turn could be defeated by other styles that weren’t *better*, just *different*. An arms race

developed, only to be abandoned by most protagonists who recognized that it would never end.

That brought up the simple question of what these styles were *for*. They were too hard and expensive for casual students seeking simple self-defense skills and cheap fitness training, and too brutal for many sporting contests; students found it difficult to break the habits hammered into them by training when contest rules treated them as fouls. Military forces might see some use for them, but armies were mostly in the business of using high-tech weapons, and the best martial-arts styles still offered little protection against a bullet fired from a cheap handgun by a semi-trained shooter.

Nonetheless, elements of the various “ultimate” styles developed during this period survive to 2100, and there remains a tantalizing and not *entirely* crazy possibility – at least in the eyes of martial-arts fans – that a true ultimate style exists somewhere, presumably known only to a few reclusive experts. “Ultimate Combat,” as detailed in *Martial Arts* (p. 144), would be a valid basis for this. In the fairly realistic setting of a *Transhuman Space* campaign, the style probably would not include cinematic skills and perks (or the need for Trained by a Master), but it might permit some Unusual Training perks to give access to some of those. However, many of the styles developed in the 2080s included some weapons training – computer analysis confirmed that, yes, weapons *are* deadlier than bare hands – so this hypothetical style might include some weapons skills, too.

At a lower level of intensity, some dojos have incorporated ideas from this period into their own training regimes, particularly for military and unlimited combat-sports use. Styles that may have added some new ideas in this period (which could mean *dropping* combat art or sports skills) include Jeet Kune Do and Tae Kwon Do. One new style that owes something to the process is Cocerdelmi (p. 24), which was optimized for use against opponents in body armor.

THE STATE OF PLAY IN 2100

That golden age didn't last very long. The scope for new inventions proved finite, although the tools remained available and effective. Still, at the dawn of the 22nd century, the martial arts are evolving almost as rapidly and confusingly as most other fields of human endeavor. Some old forms and applications have gone out of date, to be preserved only by a handful of traditionalists and historians – but VR and slink recording technologies allow such skills to be preserved much more reliably and meticulously than once was the case. Meanwhile, new forms, meeting the needs of new technologies and new environments (or just new fashions), do continue to appear, sometimes developing through fast prototyping, spreading through a subculture, and fading into obscurity or mutating beyond recognition, all in the space of a couple of years. Styles that take advantage of new biomods, or the unique abilities of some bioroids, and even cybershells, are also developing. One or two styles have even been designed for uplifted animals; see *Canine Police Combat* in *Transhuman Mysteries*. The fact that some styles persist largely unchanged is a tribute to their memetic strength – or to their timeless usefulness.

In addition, many styles created in the 20th century have evolved in new and surprising ways in the 21st. For example, a handful of instructors staying true to Bruce Lee's concept of Jeet Kune Do (see *Martial Arts*, pp. 164-165) are turning it into a rather different style to accommodate biomods and variable gravity.

FITNESS, SELF-DEFENSE, AND SHOW

In 2100, the fitness arts have almost completely vanished. Thanks to modern biomods, citizens of Fourth and Fifth Wave nations no longer have any great desire for them, and those living in poorer areas of the world usually have more urgent needs. Anyone old-school or poor enough to maintain their fitness the antiquated way can usually find a well-designed training regime, perhaps with extensive AI support, without having to piggyback on the forms and traditions of the combat arts.

Martial arts as *arts*, like many forms of T'ai Chi and kata demonstrations in karate, however, are alive and kicking. Likewise, dojos that teach martial arts for self-defense still exist, although they are more common on Mars and in Third and Fourth Wave nations than in the secure and wealthy Fifth Wave

areas of Earth. Martial arts are still something that the average civilian has seen demonstrated and maybe considered studying.

COMBAT SPORTS

Classical martial-arts tournaments in styles like boxing or kickboxing went the same way as almost all other spectator sports when confronted with upgraded, uplifted, or biomodified contenders. It was just too hard to maintain the illusion of fairness or a balanced set of rules and restrictions, let alone an

ethos of sporting amateurism. Meanwhile, contests of combat that allow for and incorporate such modifications are widely prevalent. They often combine the conventions of a sporting tournament with the atmosphere of a trade show, as the creators and vendors of different biomods and bioroid designs compete with each other to demonstrate the superiority of their current models. At the least reputable – and least legal – end of the scale are the deadly bloodsport fights that can be found almost anywhere in the solar system – if you know who to ask and don't look like a cop. Even these have some of the trade-show aspect, though, as black clinics want to make sales, too. These various contests provide the entertainment demanded by most armchair fight fans, who can convince themselves that modern medicine (or the use of

bioroids) make the injuries involved impermanent and thus morally acceptable.

Quite how immoral some such contests really are is in fact a divisive issue in 2100, reflecting larger ethical questions. In societies where bioroids are regarded as property – or as abominations – the idea of matching them in no-holds-barred combat may hardly look problematic, especially if they have been designed and trained for the purpose, perhaps seeming eager for the fight. In places where they are seen as fully sapient beings with all the rights that implies, the idea of “brainwashing” them for combat is seen as appalling, and bioroid meatfights are despised as the morally corrupting pathology of debased societies. In other places, beings with full citizenship voluntarily engage in almost-lethal combat, trusting modern medicine and advanced biomods to keep them alive and intact in the end. Sometimes, this is legal; sometimes, it is banned as an affront to human dignity and a misuse of medical ingenuity. In banned locations, it is widely considered as mere barbaric pit-fighting with a layer of feeble excuses, its participants clearly in need of psychological therapy. Of course, where such things are banned, some people watch illicit broadcasts and recordings, or take holidays to places where the laws are more relaxed.



It's possible to hold combat contests entirely in virtual reality, of course, and some such contests have their fans – but they aren't as widespread as might be expected. To start with, there's the simple feeling that VR just *isn't the same* as reality, and that VR combat is somehow “cheating” or lacks an “edge.” Certainly, the feedback through a VR suit doesn't convey some of the detail of real combat, and even interface implants and the best software have trouble with the complexities of balance, action and reaction, and physical pain. Suits capable of transmitting damaging levels of impact force, or implants capable of inducing serious pain, are generally unpopular and carry unavoidable risks. They are actively illegal in some places, but without them, virtual combat isn't truly realistic. Even when underground virtual arenas use such technologies (which are also sometimes relied on for quick-and-dirty military training), audiences are often cynical about the whole subject. People who want to see bloodsports tend to insist on real blood – and sometimes on slinky records to prove that the loser was really *hurt*. This adds to the sleazy image of the whole business.

Some combat sports employ *cybershell* combatants – sometimes humanoid shells, but more often specially designed shells that tend to look like bad cartoons of military RATS designs with garish embellishments. It's hard to ban these – sapient beings are never harmed in these contests, after all – but some free SAI's regard them as being in extreme bad taste.

Derived Fictional Arts

The software aides available to martial-arts students in 2100 open up many possibilities, not all of them very sensible. Some such programs can analyze recordings of fighters in action, usually to deduce what styles and forms they may have studied. Sufficiently detailed analysis of a large enough body of recordings can reverse engineer an entire style and help work out how to recreate it from scratch. Applied to historical recordings, this has enabled teachers to recreate “lost” styles from the 20th century, and to explain the secrets of deceased combat experts. Applied to other recordings, the results are plain bizarre.

Specifically, some fans of various popular media properties that happen to include a lot of combat have fed their favorite recordings to martial-arts analysis programs, forcing them to “recreate” the styles used by fictional characters. As the actors were usually following the guidance of professional fight arrangers, whose objective was to make the scenes look good rather than to show genuinely effective combat skills (which would, after all, often have been dangerous to other actors), these “derived styles” are invariably pretty useless, being much heavier on Art versions of skills than on really useful training. Nonetheless, dedicated fans will go to the trouble of learning them, and are sometimes tragically deluded enough to try using them in real life-and-death situations.

In a few cases, dedicated but not totally delusional students have recognized the limitations of such styles, and sought to convert them into something more useful, switching the Art skills to functional combat versions. This can work in principle, but tends to produce something that annoys serious fans of the source material by being less faithful and more brutal – and still not that useful in a real fight.

See p. 27 for some examples of derived styles.

They do attract a lot of enthusiasm from the organic chauvinist end of the market, which likes to see AI-controlled shells being smashed up.

To further add to the difficulties, some recordings or slink experiences are actually carefully constructed dramas – “no organic beings were harmed during the making of this InVid.” Violence in the media remains a live issue in 2100, with access controls in more restrictive societies and parental censorware locked in unending struggle with the ingenuity of those who want their fix of violent entertainment or are willing to supply it. In general, “genuinely fake” material is hard to ban, at least when it refrains from tipping into what society in general regards as outright violence-porn (mostly depictions of uncontrolled violence against defenseless victims with a high subjectivity level). Even so, responsible parents, guardians, and personal AI's try to monitor for unhealthy levels of enthusiasm for such stuff – definitions of “unhealthy” also being debated, of course. Meanwhile, ingeniously sleazy vendors employ memeticists to spread the belief that some recordings aren't actually fake, whatever the tags may say, giving them the added thrill of the secretly illicit.

POLICE AND MILITARY DOCTRINES

Virtually all professional law-enforcement personnel – be they on Earth or beyond – can be expected to have some form of hand-to-hand combat training, if only a simple art with the Police lens (*Martial Arts*, pp. 144-145). In Fourth and Fifth Wave areas, the efficiency of VR-based training has shifted such skills from being an option to being the norm, for serious professionals – while cops in troubled Third Wave regions are more likely to *need* to be effective street-fighters, even if their schooling is less formal. Training often integrates close combat with the use of assorted “sublethal” ranged weapons, to the point that the Police lens might very well add assorted Beam Weapons or Guns skills or Liquid Projector (Sprayer), and possibly the associated Fast-Draw skills and Retain Weapon techniques. Shield skill is also appropriate for some cops with riot control training, and Shortsword works with both old-fashioned batons and stun wands (see p. 33). The use of arm-mounted weapon pods and the need to deal with cybershells with integral weapons has reduced the attention paid to disarming techniques, especially as recognition pads in weapon handgrips make it impossible to use an opponent's gun after taking it off him. In turn, this has led to slightly less emphasis on weapon retention.

Traditional martial arts are less commonplace in military organizations – except for those that *also* perform some kind of police function. Although most forces teach advanced melee techniques to a few units, many Fifth Wave armies have largely abandoned the idea of human special-operations or infiltration/recon units in favor of cybershell and microbot solutions to those requirements. In addition, during downtime, most units engage in extensive VR-based training in multiple skills, which may include basic or even quite advanced unarmed combat.

Famous Masters in 2100

Martin Ballantine: The creator of ARC-P (p. 22) retired from the US Army decades ago. Following a moderately successful civilian career in various branches of VR development and some rejuvenation treatments, he is living in an Eloi community in California, taking occasional consultancy work in VR design over the Web. Periodically, dedicated students of the style he formulated track him down and approach him in search of advanced training, despite his own repeated comments that he was a VR designer, not a warrior. He was originally amused by this, but is now merely irritated. Two of these people are the subjects of restraining orders from the local court.

Anthony Proudhomme: The official inheritor of the mantle of leadership in the Bantujutsu community (pp. 22-23) is still active and still giving lessons – for high fees. Even aside from his unpopularity with some of his uncle's more obsessive followers, he isn't universally *highly* rated in the martial-arts community; his competition record is skimpy at best, after all. Nevertheless, it's not always wise to discuss this in public; some of his followers are touchy and capable, and Bantujutsu isn't a gentle style.

Paul Sayama: The creator of Hishôjutsu (p. 26) retired some years ago to a moderately substantial estate near Lake Candor, on Mars, where he lives on royalties from his past writings and occasionally contributes to new instructional InVids to keep his hand in. He is not a recluse, but he guards his privacy. His staff AIs insist firmly that he no longer takes pupils, but rumors abound in the martial-arts world about youngsters who've impressed him enough. These are *probably* just fan fictions.

Sylvia Vigil: The founder of Margaret Station's Dancing Crane Studios (see *High Frontier*, p. 103) doesn't claim to be a martial-arts mistress (she'd certainly wince at "master"). She likewise has played no part in recent developments in the martial arts on the station, such as the creation of Margaretian Karate (pp. 26-28). Despite her current health problems, she retains much from her decades of experience; she could be expected to perform respectably in a sporting contest, and could look after herself in a street fight. Still, anyone approaching her in search of "combat secrets" will be briskly directed to the Studios' numerous full-time teachers.

Master Xiao-Yue Zhang: While there are inevitably many arguments about who is the best martial artist in any region, most knowledgeable insiders give the title on Mars to Master (never "Mistress") Zhang (see *In the Well*, p. 61). Deported from Earth in the 2080s as a subversive element, Zhang is a fierce feminist in a still rather traditionalist, sexist milieu; most of her students are female, although her prejudices aren't absolute. She's hard to locate and harder to impress. Despite being over 50 (which shows in her gray hair), she is still in formidable condition. Even experts in the field are uncertain of her full capabilities. She must know (and probably helped invent) Zhua (p. 31). She presumably knows at least enough about Hishôjutsu to be able to counter it. She also is believed to have studied more than one traditional kung fu style before she came to Mars. It's possible that she is one of the *true* masters of Jeet Kune Do, adapting it to new conditions.

Likewise, armies with human or bioroid troops in serious combat roles still need to teach aggression and cheap, low-tech methods to maintain fitness. Thus, basic martial-arts classes are still found, with or without the use of VR.

The Military lens (*Martial Arts*, p. 144) may be appropriate, but knife-fighting is seen as rather archaic at best, and the near-total disappearance of the bayonet makes Spear skill superfluous. The amount of body armor available on all sides, and less fastidiousness about killing than among police, means that serious military combat training is largely about high-tech weapons. Most or all of the shooting styles described in *GURPS Tactical Shooting* survive somewhere on Earth in 2100, although the number of armies who still choose to deploy mostly human front-line forces and can afford to employ sophisticated training regimes is steadily shrinking.

In fact, some weapon-training regimes have become refined and formalized to the point where they resemble old-school martial arts in flavor – although once again, in the most advanced armies, even light weapons handling is becoming primarily the province of cybershells. (Controlling those shells can be something of an art in itself, though; see *Remote Sniping*, p. 29.) The extent to which high-end military AIs with full decision-making capability have to be *trained* rather than *programmed* to use their weapons complicates things; some military systems are actually experts in something not unlike martial-arts styles.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARS

The human colonies on Mars are widely and quite accurately perceived as being important to martial-arts study and development in 2100, as explained in *In the Well* (p. 61). Tight weapons control in domed communities, the strong Chinese tradition of martial-arts study (including very practical forms among the Triads who have expanded so enthusiastically to Rust China), and the options opened up by lower gravity have combined to produce something of a renaissance in combat arts on Mars. The media in the rest of the system have latched onto this, taking the traditional Chinese idea of the martial-arts hero and suggesting that most such people are found on the Red Planet these days. For once, the media isn't too far off the truth here; it's been estimated that between 10% and 25% of the adult population of Mars has some kind of formal martial-arts training – although not many of them are obsessive adepts or enigmatic experts.

Furthermore, Mars has helped keep traditional unarmed and low-tech combat arts dynamic and innovative. It has given the media a hook on which to hang periodic martial-arts fashions. It has also provided a new environment in which martial-arts teachers have been obliged to adapt and refine their skills rather than just parroting tradition. Statistically, with its much larger population, Earth still has many more skilled martial artists than Mars – but Mars arguably has the most interesting martial-arts scene.

CHAPTER TWO

MARTIAL ARTISTS

The first round of the contest was based on a random draw, conducted five minutes before the first fight; the organizers reckoned that this added excitement. The big display screen on the end wall of the station's main chamber showed an abstract whirl of color – pure show, of course – and then displayed a list. At the top, it read: CARLOTTA STEINE vs. GERARD LAM'RIE.

"New one on me – what've I got here?" Carlotta asked her trainer. He defocused, and a splash of text played across his glasses.

"Yeah, he's pretty new to the game. He's from Ottawa," he read. "Unofficial word is that he worked protection for the Macbride family up there . . ."

"Is he human?" Carlotta interrupted.

Her trainer paused, reading more. "Mostly. Far as anyone knows. And the refs are straight in this place."

"Then he didn't bodyguard for the Macbrides," Carlotta stated flatly. "They use an all-'roid team. They can't trust real humans."

"Whatever you say. But he's definitely had Shan Chuan training. Used it in both his recorded fights so far. Two wins, by the way."

"In zero-G?"

"That's what the software says."

Carlotta grinned. "Lessons in leverage coming right up."

The "ring" was roughly spherical, of course, with as large a diameter as permitted by the configuration of the soda-can station – rented by the organizers through an innocuous-looking blind trust, flagged as being for unspecified "industrial" use. The sphere was defined by a couple of dozen posts, hastily glued at the best points the set-up team could find and linked by a lattice of carbon nanotube webbing, stretched taut but still capable of providing a little bounce.

Lam'rie entered the ring, and for a moment, Carlotta wondered if he'd somehow spoofed the weight-class check. He would certainly have been much taller than her, standing upright under gravity. But when she looked again, she realized how thin he was.

Tweaked muscles, she thought.

He dropped into a freefighter's launch pose at his start point, and she mirrored the motion and pushed herself into focus. Shan Chuan fighters took a pride in their lack of subtlety, but it was a smart kind of unsubtlety – and they fought hard. Even winning a fight against one could leave you with a hefty medical bill and a few boring weeks in therapy, if you weren't careful.

The bell sounded, and both fighters launched themselves at each other.

The martial-arts styles discussed in this supplement primarily use the standard **GURPS** rules with the additional features and details given in **GURPS Martial Arts**. However, this chapter covers a few additional concerns.

"If they must make war," these young men thought, "why in thunder don't they do it like sensible men?"

– H.G. Wells,
"The Land Ironclads"

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

See *Changing Times* for further notes on character creation in this setting.

ADVANTAGES

Many traits can give a martial artist a potent edge, if used right in the right setting. See **Martial Arts** (pp. 42-49) for more general guidance, but note that advanced technology makes it

rather easier to acquire some advantages without cinematic levels of training or bizarre special exercises.

Claws

see p. B42

As suggested in **Martial Arts** (p. 57), Karate skill can give its damage bonus to claws as well as to ordinary punches and kicks.

Enhanced Defenses

see p. B51

While these are technically considered cinematic, fighters with combat training and technologically boosted nervous systems – and especially with Enhanced Time Sense (see below) – can treat one or two levels of these advantages as quite realistic.

Enhanced Time Sense

see p. B52

AIs and the recipients of Brain Booster nanosymbionts have this. They therefore enjoy most of the combat advantages discussed in *Martial Arts* (p. 44). However, fighters in noncinematic games still can't dodge beam weapons or use Bullet Time, and can only dodge sniper shots that they could perceive at least a fraction of a second before they arrive (probably requiring a Per roll at -5 or worse).

Gunslinger

see p. B58

In cinematic games, this gives users of firearms-based styles access to their cinematic features, just as Trained by a Master and Weapon Master do for melee skills. See *High-Tech* (p. 249) and *Gun Fu* (pp. 15-16) for appropriate additional benefits for this advantage.

High Pain Threshold

see p. B59

Military VR training systems are designed to inure troops to shock and stress. Only a minority gain this advantage as a result – and that may require levels of “distress simulation” that most civilized nations consider unacceptable, even in military training – but it is possible.

Modular Abilities

see p. B71

This advantage is standard among AIs, in the form of the Computer Brain version with the Skills and Languages Only limitation. This *cannot* be used to gain techniques or Style Perks. In theory, techniques might be possible, but the difficulties of programming skill software to interact so closely with another skill are prohibitive in practice. As the Limited Integration limitation is also standard, infomorphs can't usually use Modular Abilities to become effective martial artists, although high DX and a large skill slot can make for fairly good programmed combat skills in a pinch. Still, Modular Abilities can have its uses in combat; see *Brawl-Aide* (p. 35).

Striker

see p. B88

It's quite easy for biomods or genetic engineering to give someone a Striker of some sort, although most people in 2100 consider such things rather crass, silly, or antisocial. Strikers can usually be used with Brawling or Karate skills, and get the damage bonuses for high skill. However, the GM may rule that

a rare and bizarre sort of Striker doesn't combine well with such skills, especially if they were learned as part of a traditional martial art that assumes standard human physiology. A spectacular set of horns curling forward from the back of his head aren't much use to a karate fighter who has mastered a string of classical kicking and punching kata!

In such cases, the GM may still rule that the Striker *can* be used with the skill – but only given special training, represented by a perk (akin to Biting Mastery).

Trained by a Master and Weapon Master

see p. B93 and p. B99

These are the definitive features of a cinematic martial artist, and should only be permitted in unusually cinematic *Transhuman Space* campaigns.



PERKS

Perks marked * are cinematic, and require Gunslinger, Trained by a Master, or Weapon Master as a prerequisite. (See p. 12 for discussion of why these cinematic advantages are covered in this book.) Those marked † require specialization by skill, weapon, etc., as noted.

Style Familiarity

In general, Style Familiarity functions as described in *Martial Arts* (p. 49), providing access to the style's other specific perks, acquaintance with cultural details particular to the style and its schools, a limited Claim to Hospitality with some school or instructor (which, in turn, permits easy entrance to school facilities, or ensures at least a hearing from the instructor), and a reduced defense penalty from feints and deceptive attacks when facing another user of the style. Where styles represent purely military training regimes – such as ARC-P (p. 22), Military Zero-G (p. 28), or many instances of Corderdelmi (p. 24) – or focus primarily on long-range weapons – such as Battledress Training (p. 23) or Remote Sniping (p. 29) – most of these benefits may not amount to much.

Cinematic Elements

Normally, *Transhuman Space* games are regarded as “realistic,” in the sense that the basic laws of physics are respected and “cinematic” features of the *GURPS* rules are not available, definitely including cinematic martial arts. Why, then, does this book cover cinematic options and styles?

There are several reasons. First and simplest, it’s perfectly possible to run a cinematic martial-arts game in the setting, perhaps emulating the style of various flamboyant Japanese SF anime and manga. Many gamers like cinematic stuff, and we’re not going to prohibit it if that’s what everyone in a group wants. Mixing the numerous options presented by TL10 technology with those of cinematic combat makes for a slightly more complex game, and advanced technology will probably turn out still to trump fancy martial-arts moves a lot of the time, but it can work.

Second, some of these features may be a bit less cinematic in a game with biotech-enhanced fighters and combat in different gravity fields. For example, this chapter includes martial arts developed for use under Martian gravity that include *chambara*-style leaping around. This idea needs to be handled carefully in a generally realistic game, but it merits mentioning.

Third and most important, whether or not they really work, the cinematic options associated with a style define its mythology and popular image. The martial arts

have always had legends of special abilities attached to them. Admittedly, in 2100, the public is mostly aware of the difference between the myths and the brute facts of martial-arts combat. While InVid productions often feature more outrageous stunts than even the most extreme *wuxia* movies of a century before, popular slinky recordings of bloody meatfights are forced almost by definition to present the utmost in realism. (A realism that, if rumors are true, results in a small-but-profitable black market in “death match” slinkies.) However, even when faced with bleeding facts, humans like to believe the improbable, so the legends and urban myths about secret techniques of classic and modern martial arts are still strong and widespread.

A style said to offer Immovable Stance and Pressure Points skills is presumably one noted for calm subtlety, while legends that speak of Flying Jump Kicks and Whirlwind Attacks suggest a style noted for flamboyance and swashbuckling. (Likewise, styles with *no* cinematic options are clearly seen as brutally practical.) Martial artists who get work in the entertainment business will need to know what visual effects will be expected in their fight scenes, and experts in a style may have to deal with gullible fans who assume that they can really do that stuff. Of course, even they may sometimes wonder if *some* of the stories may be partly true . . .

Military-trained fighters probably share their teachers’ culture anyway; they will have difficulty gaining access to schools on military bases where they don’t belong, and firearms don’t lend themselves to much feinting. In compensation, stylists may automatically be considered to be familiar with any equipment (especially weapons) associated with the style or its schools. They may also receive +3 to Gesture or Soldier skills to coordinate tactics with others trained in the same style.

Style Perks

Most of these work as described in *Martial Arts* (pp. 49-52) or *High-Tech* (pp. 249-250), with a few setting-specific details.

Armorer’s Gift: This can specialize by Beam Weapons or Gunner skills as well as by Gun type, for anything man-portable (even if it needs power-armor assistance to carry it). It can also be specialized in Armoury (Battlesuits), although field-stripping a suit of power armor takes at least five minutes even with the perk.

Unusual Training: One version of this that has developed on Mars is *Combat Jumping*. This allows *chambara*-style jumping distances (full distance, not halved) in combat; it is most beneficial to realistic martial artists under low gravity. Using it requires both Acrobatics and Jumping skills at DX or better. Also, flashy spacer combatants may have *Free-Fall Roll*, which enables the fighter to train in and use the Roll with Blow technique, but only in zero-G.

Some styles and schools – especially those influenced by the 2080s quest for an ultimate style (see p. 6) – offer (or claim to

offer) access to other abilities normally classified as cinematic. At the GM’s option, this may be legitimate, at least some of the time. Optimized exercise and diet regimens, backed up by biotech and TL10 medicine, might indeed give somewhat exotic results, from surprising levels of Striking Strength to more or less functional Pressure Points skill. In short, things often said to be theoretically within human grasp but not practically attainable might be quite mundane if your teacher is a computer and you have Fifth Wave performance-enhancers. Represent this by adding versions of Special Exercises or Unusual Training to the relevant style’s perks list.

The following are new Style Perks used in this book.

Army of One*

You can shoot machine guns from the hip and fire shoulder-launched missiles while steering a car with the other hand. When wielding a heavy weapon with any Artillery or Gunner skill – or with the GL, LAW, or LMG specialties of Guns – you may ignore any † (two-handed) or M (mounted) note on its ST, and all extra crew requirements, as long as you meet the ST listed for it in the table. This lets you use it one-handed, sans loaders or assistants.

Cookie Cutter*†

You can use a full-automatic weapon (optionally, even a shotgun!) to cut holes through walls, floors, and ceilings – like a jigsaw through plywood. Each magazine emptied creates an opening big enough to admit one SM 0 person (or two people clinging to each other).

You must specialize by shooting skill. The *weapon* matters less and need not be one that could actually chew through the target's DR or HP. In the movies and InVids, this perk works fine with everything from 9mm machine pistols to TL10 assault rifles. Cookie Cutter only allows dramatic exits and entries, though. You can't use it to bypass armor or the plot – no destroying vault doors in crime stories!

Cool Under Fire

You don't experience "tunnel vision" under fire and can quickly update your mental picture of the battlefield. When making pop-up attacks (p. B390), you don't suffer the -2 to hit if the target is no further away in yards than your Per plus Acute Vision (if any). This perk is redundant if you have Enhanced Time Sense or Gunslinger.

Lower Arm Blindside

This perk is *only* available to those with fully functional extra arms instead of legs – usually meaning that they're Kumo parahumans (*Deep Beyond*, p. 113), or have received extremely radical biomods. Foot manipulators, as with the Tennin parahuman design, aren't sufficient!

You've trained to exploit your unusual physique against opponents who are accustomed to fighting ordinary bipeds. When you punch or use weapons held in your lower arms, opponents parry at -1. This doesn't work against leg/foot parries (see *Martial Arts*, p. 123) or the Jam technique (assuming that the fighters are more or less face to face), or if you and your opponent are fighting inverted with respect to each other ("head to foot"), or against fighters who have extra arms instead of legs themselves – they tend to anticipate such moves instinctively!

Only a few "spacer" styles teach this trick, and finding an instructor can be very difficult. On the bright side, spotting which instructors will *not* know it can be rather easy.

Sifu Bruce Lee once said, "... unless a human being has three arms and four legs, there can be no different form of fighting. Basically, we have only two hands and two feet." In 2100, I'm afraid this is something a fighter can no longer safely assume.

– Anonymous JKD instructor

DISADVANTAGES

See *Martial Arts*, pp. 53-54, for more on this topic in general, including special rules for Delusions and Reputations among martial artists that can definitely apply in *Transhuman Space* games. Remember that disadvantage levels should generally be relatively low in *Transhuman Space* campaigns; many physical and mental disadvantages can be cured or fixed by sufficiently advanced technology in this setting.

Still, thanks to the prevalence of virtual reality training systems, it is surprisingly easy for very skilled *civilian* martial artists in 2100 to have disadvantages such as Combat Paralysis, Pacifism (Reluctant Killer), or Post-Combat Shakes. Well-designed military training systems usually eliminate such problems from recruits, but civilian systems may concentrate on inculcating pure skill in a slightly too-artificial environment; the first time that the student is faced with a serious, life-and-death *fight*, the psychological shock may be severe.

Fighters trained using military or underworld VR systems with less "pain protection" and more accurate simulation of the behavior of injured opponents tend to be well-inured to violence, possibly acquiring High Pain Threshold (see p. 11) – or gaining disadvantages such as Bloodlust or Callous, at least at quirk level. Military forces may tolerate attitudes that mild-mannered Fifth Wave civilian societies regard with distaste; the military thinks that these characteristics make soldiers more likely to *use* their advanced fighting skills if necessary, and may even encourage those traits a little. Nevertheless, high-tech armies *don't* like some "killer" disadvantages, such as Berserk or Bully, any more than anyone else; they make soldiers unstable in the barracks where most troops spend most of their time, and unreliable in the field. Still, some notorious incidents with VR training systems have produced whole units of severely desensitized combatants, although every Fifth Wave army *guarantees* that such problems are long since resolved in 2100.

Less controversially, modern memetics can help amplify certain tendencies. Many people in the military start with some kind of Sense of Duty, whether to squad-mates or to country, but a skilled "morale and memetics section" can do a lot to make sure of this.

Bestial and Stress Atavism

see p. B124 and p. B156

Characters with the Bestial disadvantage, permanently or temporarily induced by, say, a nanodrug, or uplifts undergoing a Stress Atavism attack, cannot use (or study) the more refined aspects of the martial arts. They might use any combat skills from a style they have studied at other times, but the GM may rule that any attack more sophisticated than a simple punch, kick, claw, bite, or flying tackle, performed as an Attack or All-Out Attack, requires too much rationality. Likewise, their defenses may be limited to dodges – no parries or blocks – although All-Out Defenses are feasible, and indeed likely against seemingly superior foes. This can vary from case to case – some animals can be quite tricky fighters – but anything that the GM decides is simply implausible for a wild animal can be prohibited.

Code of Honor

see p. B127

Personal codes are still quite widespread in 2100. Even if they can be "fixed" by memetic therapy or brainbug treatments, most people who possess them don't *want* to get rid of them. Society at large tends to agree that they're a good thing overall (-15-point versions may be regarded as somewhat psychotic, though). The Soldier's code is still especially widespread and often encouraged among human and bioroid combat forces – it helps maintain unit cohesion, after all – while the Xia code (*Martial Arts*, p. 53) has been resurrected by Chinese war veterans on Mars.

Ham-Fisted

see p. B138

This isn't exactly common in 2100, but it does sometimes appear among "street" martial artists, thanks to the existence of various dubious drugs and nanomods that attempt to boost nervous system function without proper regard for possible side effects. Other minor physical problems may derive from similar causes.

SKILLS

Martial-arts styles are mostly built out of skills. Once upon a time, this meant unarmed combat and muscle-powered weapon skills; by the 20th century, gun combat had advanced to the point where gun styles became quite feasible. In the late 21st, combat arts have become subtle and technology-based enough that the inclusion of, say, Electronics Operation in a style is perfectly plausible.

Artillery

see p. B178

Advanced technology permits the creation of hand-held indirect-fire weapons, sometimes as small as smart, guided bullets that handguns can fire. Hence, Artillery (Guided Missile) is a valid skill for ordinary infantry soldiers in 2100, and may sometimes show up in gun combat styles.

Expert Skill

see p. B193

One new Expert Skill appears in this supplement.

Robotics: This represents a general familiarization with modern robotic and cybershell technologies, such as is often

included in Countermech Training courses on the classic basis of "know thine enemy." It may also be known to entirely peaceful technology buffs, salesmen, and journalists. It grants knowledge of different models of cybershells and AIs and how they work, including some idea of their flaws. It isn't helpful in *fixing* problems, especially as it doesn't cover use of the requisite tools, but it may help with diagnosis, at the GM's option. It even covers the aesthetics of cybershell design, and a little about the market for robots. It can substitute for Computer Programming, Electrician, Electronics Repair, Engineer (Robotics), Mechanic (Robotics), or Psychology (AI) in matters relating to general robot design and standard robot models and behavior; it might also substitute for Current Affairs (Science & Technology) or even Connoisseur (Robotic Arts) at times.

Fast-Draw

see p. B194

Acceptable new specialties for this skill can include Grenade and Sprayer, for small devices used with Liquid Projector (Sprayer) skill, such as aerosol cans of tranquilizer gas; slightly larger sprayers are covered by Fast-Draw (Pistol) skill. Either may be taught as part of a practical combat style.

Games

see p. B197

Martial-arts tournaments need judges with the appropriate Games skill. However, in 2100, detailed arbitration is often handled by AIs, which have faster perceptions and which can be *certified* as totally impartial. Hence, human judges may have only moderate levels of Games skill, but add various social skills so they can handle dealings with the participants and a bit of showmanship to help present rulings and announcements to the audience.

Retreating in 3D

Retreats can be executed in three dimensions in micro-gravity or zero-G environments and underwater. This means a combatant can retreat backward and "up" or "down" as well as straight back or backward and to the sides. Using a sideslip (*Martial Arts*, p. 124), a combatant can make sideways defensive moves in many more directions, too.

Doing this sort of action effectively requires appropriate training, however. Underwater, the defender needs a solid object or surface to kick backward off, *or* must make an Aquabatics roll to swim backward effectively. In free fall, the defender needs a solid surface, a foot or hand hold, the Flight advantage, or a gadget (such as a gas jet) that grants the same ability, *and* must make a Free Fall roll at +2 to use any of these. In either case, pushing on a sufficiently solid but unfixed object – including a grappled opponent! – will send the object off in the opposite direction.

A defender retreating in these conditions must still move away from the attacker, but can travel "up" or "down" a hex in the 3D combat space as well as moving

back – thus bringing the number of potential retreat hexes from 3 to 9. All normal limitations on retreating apply. Moving "up" or "down" out of the plane in which the opponent is attacking gives an extra +1 in addition to the usual retreating or sideslip bonus; this is the same bonus as is given by the rules for aerial defense on p. B398.

These actions can be combined with Acrobatic Dodge (p. B375). Use Aquabatics instead of Acrobatics if underwater, Aerobatics (presumably learned for use in such conditions) instead of Acrobatics in free fall (as for aerial defense, p. B398). The Aquabatics skill roll for an Acrobatic Dodge underwater is separate from the one that may be required to retreat at all while in open water.

All this makes retreating while in combat in wide-open, unobstructed spaces very difficult. That can force combat in such places to be quicker and bloodier – but moving to engagement range in the first place is more complicated, and the fact that effective combat skills cannot exceed Free Fall skill means that zero-G combat is that much more problematic.

Group Performance

see p. B198

Fight Choreography is a useful extra skill for many martial artists in 2100, as they can make decent livings lending their

knowledge of combat to the entertainment business. As a lot of initial planning for fight scenes is done in virtual modeling (even if the finished scene is performed more or less live), Computer Operation may be a handy adjunct for this, although often a companion AI deals with those aspects.

TECHNIQUES

If skills define martial-arts styles in the broadest sense, techniques give them their distinctive flavors. All of the realistic techniques in *Martial Arts* can show up in *Transhuman Space* martial-arts combats, and all of the cinematic ones are still well known at least in the entertainment business. Most of them have found their way into new styles such as those detailed in Chapter 3. Cavalry Training and Combat Riding are quite rare except in the reenactment community. Mounted Shooting is periodically recreated when someone decides to train to use hand-held missile weapons from moving vehicles.

NEW TECHNIQUES

The following are new techniques taught by styles appearing in this book.

Comms Multitasking

Average

Default: Electronics Operation (Communications).

Prerequisite: Electronics Operation (Communications); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+4.

Actively maintaining electronic links to more than one recipient at a time is tricky, leading to penalties on Electronics Operation skill rolls – but you are practiced at this. When making such a roll, apply the penalty to this technique rather than

to the skill, then use the lesser of the result or your base Electronics Operation (Communications) skill.

Limpet Mine Attachment

Average

Defaults: DX or Brawling.

Prerequisite: None; cannot exceed DX+3 or Brawling+3.

Limpet mines (p. 33) can be attached to opponents in combat by hand or using a limpet mine dispenser (p. 33); in either case, roll against DX or Brawling to hit. This technique represents long practice with the task; roll against the technique level instead.

*Actively maintaining
electronic links to more
than one recipient at a
time is tricky . . .*

NONHUMAN PHYSIOLOGY

One feature of *Transhuman Space* combat is that not all opponents will be human, or even humanoid. This can have serious consequences for the martial arts. See *Martial Arts* (pp. 95 and 114-117) for more on the effects of body morphology.

Bioroid opponents (including *bioshells*) present the least serious problem here. Their designers tend to use a mostly human pattern, internally as well as externally, partly for simplicity (it's easiest to follow an existing design that you know works), and partly for reasons of aesthetics (human customers tend to find bioroids who don't *quite* function in a humanlike way rather creepy).

Uplifted animals are trickier. In general, bioengineers avoid gross physical changes, especially in the early generations, except for extra skull capacity. However, few martial arts are designed specifically for combat against animals.

Cybershells are completely nonhuman – even the ones that look human – and have few human vulnerabilities. There are

reasons why styles such as Countermech Training (pp. 24-26) avoid “fancy” moves!

Technique Problems

Various combat moves – represented by techniques – can have problems against nonhuman opposition.

Arm or Wrist Lock and Finger Lock: These presuppose an opponent with somewhat humanlike arms, although they will work well against any victim with a fairly humanoid body plan (and roughly human size). Attempting to use such a lock on a radically nonhumanoid opponent may take large penalties or simply fail, at the GM's option; the leverage issues may just be all wrong. The Flexibility or Double-Jointed advantages, which may be incorporated in some bioroid and cybershell designs, already give bonuses to break free (see p. B56), though not for other purposes such as resisting damage. Extra-Flexible arms (see p. B53) grant *immunity* to these moves!

Choke Hold and Head Lock: These require that the victim has a neck, of course; Injury Tolerance (No Neck) negates them. If an opponent has that advantage to represent the absence of any vulnerable airways or arteries, but possesses a physical neck (like some *Transhuman Space* humanoid cybershell designs), an attacker can place such a hold. However, he cannot subsequently attempt to inflict fatigue damage, and any crushing damage he does counts as ordinary torso damage. A bioshell is also immune to fatigue from this attack, as it doesn't depend on blood supplies to the brain, but still has to worry about crushing (tracheal) damage to the neck (see p. B552), as loss of the ability to breathe is still dangerous for such a body.

Ear Clap: This attack depends quite heavily on the victim having a humanlike ear and skull structure. Bioroids and humanoid bioshells are vulnerable to it, but animals (including uplifts) may be effectively harder to affect or functionally immune, at the GM's option – placing a cupped-hand attack so as to direct force appropriately *into* the ear requires a certain amount of knowledge and precision. This might be classed as a familiarity problem with some animals. Most cybershells are likely to be immune – their auditory input systems are just too different. Certainly, Protected Hearing means that an organic victim gets +5 to the HT roll to resist stunning, and that he can never suffer permanent deafness as a result. When combined with Cybershell Body or Machine, assume the target has complete immunity.

Eye-Gouging: This, and the more exotic eye attacks described in *Martial Arts*, depend on the victim not only having eyes, but having fairly soft, organic eyes. Hence, they work quite well on most organic beings, but cybershells with DR on their visual sensors are obviously less vulnerable. The GM may rule that they are effectively immune to Eye-Pluck attacks, and can apply the rules for *Hurting Yourself* (p. B379) freely; sticking delicate fingers into rugged camera lenses may be worse for the fingers than for the camera! The Nictitating Membrane advantage also provides any being possessing it with useful protection against all sorts of attacks on the eyes.

Judo Throw, Sacrifice Throw, Sweep, and Trip: Training for these tends to assume humanoid opponents, although some of the basic principles should work against most opponents with legs. Treat them as working normally against any humanoid bioroid or cybershell. Other body morphologies can complicate the issue considerably!

To start with, opponents with a low center of mass may be a problem, at the GM's option. As a general rule, Horizontal opponents with an SM within one of the attacker's give the attacker -1 or -2 to Judo Throw and Sacrifice Throw attempts. Meanwhile, the defender gets a corresponding +1 or +2 in the

Quick Contest to resist a Sweep or a takedown, and to the DX or Acrobatics roll forced by Trip. Victims with Extra Legs are thrown at -1 and resist at +1 per leg past two, cybershells with wheels get similar modifiers for each wheel past two, and those with tracks or who move by slithering (e.g., snakebots) are thrown at -4 and resist at +4. (If they're small and light enough to flip over, attackers will usually do better simply to grab them and throw them around.)

Neck Snap: Like a choking attack, this depends on the victim having a neck to attack. Cybershells with a neck but no special structural vulnerability there can be attacked, but only for standard damage as if for a torso hit. Still, if the attacker can inflict enough damage to disable the cybershell that way, he can declare that he's twisted its head right off, which always scores points for cool.

Wrench Spine: This, and the cinematic Backbreaker technique, assume that the victim has a spine – a more-or-less central rigid bracing member in the body that's vulnerable to brute force attacks and well worth damaging. This will be true with most bioroids, bioshells, and uplifted animals, but cybershells tend to be differently engineered. Fighters can still use these attacks (or make a targeted attack on where the spine "should" be), but the damage they do is applied as an ordinary attack to the torso.

Hit Location Issues

If you need to determine random hit locations on a nonhumanoid cybershell, find the most similar form in the tables on p. B553 (or some can use the vehicle location rules on pp. B554-555). Many of these are obvious – a snakebot uses the Vermiform table – while others can be identified with a little

thought. Many cybershells are arachnoid (especially if they've got "spider" in their type name), although if they have less than eight limbs the GM may have to treat, say, "Leg 7-8" hits as "Leg 5-6," while "Leg 1-2" hits will actually be arm hits for most such shells. Others, with pod-shaped bodies, multiple limbs, and front-mounted work arms or weapon mounts, are functionally cancrroid.

In addition, some hit locations – which may of course be the subjects of a Targeted Attack technique – work differently for different body patterns. Most are discussed in the *Basic Set* (pp. B552-555) or *Martial Arts* (p. 137). The following need further consideration in some situations.

Eye: Not all beings that have both eyes and brains will have the two in close proximity. This is not only true of many cybershells but also of some radically nonhuman beings such as fish-based bioshells or the Astropus. At the GM's discretion, Eye hits on such creatures can still blind but not be treated as Skull hits.



Some designers working on combat bioroids, cybershells, or even parahuman genetic templates anticipate particular categories of attack and incorporate features designed to counter them.

Jaw: Even if a cybershell has a head, it may not have a jaw; the usual indicator of this is if it can't make biting attacks. As a minor additional benefit, it's harder to gag something that talks through a loudspeaker than to silence someone who has to move a jaw to speak.

Nose: A being that doesn't need to breathe (or can't breathe air, but breathes water through gills) won't generally have a vulnerable nose. This is mostly a difference between (air-breathing) organic bodies and mechanical cybershells. Some humanoid shells have humanlike faces for aesthetic reasons, but with noses that don't do much; treat hits there as ordinary face hits.

Spine: See the notes on the Wrench Spine technique (p. 16) for guidance on which opponents have spines to attack. Attacks on this location are rare and difficult enough that not having the vulnerability can be treated purely as a special effect.

Cinematic Skills

In games with cinematic martial arts, the problems mentioned above will extend to some cinematic skills. Whether nonhuman beings can *learn* such skills may be another interesting question; in general, if the skill costs FP to use, a machine fighter with no FP is incapable of using it – the skill needs access to an organic being's chi flow.

Breaking Blow (p. B182): A cybershell's armor counts as "artificial" even though it's part of the character template. This is one thing that can give cinematic "robot fighters" some chance.

Hypnotic Hands (**Martial Arts**, p. 61): As a matter of style, bioroids, ghosts, and uplifted animals – having minds on something analogous to the human pattern – can usually be treated as being susceptible to this highly cinematic form of hypnotism. However, the GM might decide that the skill user suffers a familiarity penalty when initially dealing with radically nonhuman beings. Artificial intelligences are immune to hypnotism – they aren't built with the same sort of subconscious structures. Having no need to sleep may help, too. Nonetheless, in highly cinematic games where chi-based martial arts are supposed to be a match for advanced technology, anything with a mind might be equally vulnerable to arcane methods of distraction and confusion.

Invisibility Art (p. B202) and **Kiai** (p. B203): These should be assumed to work just as well on AIs as on humans – though perhaps *not* on completely automated sub-AI sensor systems. They work by fooling or stunning *minds*, and anything that can justify the word "intelligence" has a mind of sorts.

Pressure Points and Pressure Secrets (p. B215): These are supposed to be based on detailed knowledge of the anatomy of living things and "chi flows," so they *might* work against bioroids and bioshells, assuming that their artificial nature doesn't cause problems. The user might take a penalty against such targets, but if these skills work against animals, they are presumably "general" enough for this purpose. They probably

won't work against cybershells unless the GM decides to take a highly cinematic approach, ruling that anything with any kind of motivation has detectable vulnerable points or a discernible chi flow, and even then, the initial attack roll may take a familiarity penalty.

Sensitivity (**Martial Arts**, p. 62): This should work fine against organic beings, including bioroids and bioshells, although there might be a familiarity penalty when first using it against a nonhumanoid animal. Cybershells, not having organic musculature, could give the skill user a penalty of, say, -3; it's still possible to read their stance and tiny movements, but interpreting some of that information is much harder, and there's less to read.

Defensive Features

Some designers working on combat bioroids, cybershells, or even parahuman genetic templates anticipate particular categories of attack and incorporate features designed to counter them. This can be as simple as armored lenses on cybershell cameras (treated as a Nictitating Membrane in **GURPS** terms), as broad as giving a bioroid Flexibility to help defeat limb locks and grapples (among other benefits), or as subtle as the added redundancy of backup hearts or a rearrangement of an organic being's skeleton or internal organs to reduce specific problems arising from injury. These last sorts of thing can be represented by extra HP (usually 1 or 2, but up to 4 in advanced designs), levels of Hard to Kill (up to 3), or Injury Tolerance (No Vitals) with an Unreliable limitation that has an activation number no greater than 8. Certainly, many "male configuration" combat bioroids have internal testes only (possibly with external dummies for show), and should be treated as non-male in case of a groin hit.

Where the benefit from a design improvement is real but limited and isn't covered by an existing advantage, a perk might represent it. This will give from +1 to +3 to rolls to resist, defend against, or counter a specific category of attack or problem, or -1 to -3 to opponents' attacks; the level of benefit depends on exactly how broad and common the problem being defended against may be. Perks that give just +1 might be taken more than once (providing cumulative benefits) in second-generation or especially clever designs. For example, "Improved Stability," defined as a lowered center of mass and some joint adjustments, could give -1/+1 protection against trips, sweeps, and throws, much like a radically nonhuman body plan (see p. 15). "Joint Reinforcements" could give +2 to resist damage from Arm, Wrist, Finger, or Leg Locks. A "Reinforced Inner Ear" might give +3 to HT rolls to resist the deafening effects of Ear Claps and similar maneuvers. Other such design features may be effectively equivalent to Iron Body Parts (**Martial Arts**, p. 50); for example, a reinforced throat could be equivalent to Iron Neck.

CHAPTER THREE

NEW AND CHANGED STYLES

"What we got, 'migo?"

"Pretty much the usual, chief. Neighborhood never liked the provisional gov'ment, not much work round here – things boiled over this morning. Just a riot, no real command structure we can trace, but there's a memetics whizkid at the back. Pull him out, the government meme boys can damp this down much faster. Is one catch, though."

"Yeah?"

"The backroom team ran a search. Three businesses registered in this vecindad as providing, quote, martial-arts training, unquote. One of 'em licensed by Makombo-Proudhomme International. And we think there's at least one black clinic down here, too."

"Great. Buncha amped-up psycho brawlers. Well, let's earn our fees. Come on, boys – straight extraction, and keep it nice for the cameras."

The team boiled out of the armored truck, forming up as they went. All of them had full ARC-P version 12 training, with dozens of hours of virtual experience as a team and a couple of real riots under their belts now, too. They moved down the street as a single unit, not flinching at all as a few thrown rocks bounced pointlessly off their shields. Then a half-dozen rioters burst out of a side alley, wielding staves and hatchets with a certain amount of credibility. The team members on that side turned and blocked them, holding back the assault until the second rank could bring gas sprays to bear, sending the locals back choking and gagging.

"Hold it!" the team leader snapped into his throat mike. "Something wrong there – that was planned. I think . . ."

He didn't finish the sentence, as a whip-crack report sounded from somewhere up and ahead. One of the team went down, red staining the shoulder of his armored suit.

"Sniper!" somebody yelled. "Medevac!" said another, more useful voice. Tags scrolled across the leader's helmet HUD.

THREAT LEVEL ESCALATION +3.

AUTHORIZED RESPONSE INITIATED.

Another three whip-cracks sounded, but these were from the truck that the team had left behind them. Glass shattered on a building ahead. Another tag flashed up.

1 IDENTIFIED TARGET BELIEVED NEUTRALIZED.

0 ADDITIONAL THREATS IDENTIFIED.

The truck surged past the team, screening them while they reorganized for the pull-out – but after long seconds, no further shots sounded. The team leader snarled a command to the support AI, making sure that it told the government that they now needed SWAT, not Riot Control, then pulled up an IR trace.

"All right," he told his number two, "looks like the sniper is down."

*"Just the one of him? And he was **actually** pulling his **own** trigger?"*

"Seems that way."

The deputy team leader paused to think about that for a moment. "Buncha amateurs" he muttered.

*While many martial-arts styles known in 2100 are much the same as those learned and used in 2010, there have been new developments, including some completely new creations. This chapter looks at what is available in the world of **Transhuman Space**.*

STYLE CHOICES IN 2100

The range of traditional styles available *somewhere*, if only in the form of a training InVid or two, is probably greater in 2100 than was the case a century earlier. The development of style analysis software (see p. 36) has allowed several nearly forgotten forms to be (supposedly) resurrected from old texts and recordings; the methods used by some historical masters who were active late enough to be caught on film are now

rather better understood. Meanwhile, virtual-reality training environments have become realistic enough that casual students can learn something of various very serious killing styles that were previously only studied by professional fighters and at worrying risk to the students. Of course, the accuracy of this computer-aided training is sometimes disputed.

A proper grasp of the deadlier martial arts may be hard to attain without the stress and pain of “real” training, and some experts insist that anything learned in VR should be counted as little more than a sport form. Still, the best courses and the best students have from time to time been tested in real-world fights, and have passed those tests.

Hence, a sufficiently determined and eccentric person might know nearly any style listed in *GURPS Martial Arts*. That doesn’t make such styles useful, necessarily. It likewise doesn’t prevent some from being more popular than others, whether that’s because they’re known to be more useful in a fight; they’ve had good PR; they are linked to some other powerful memplex such as a religion, philosophy, or ideology; or just through the random vagaries of fashion. For example, the Genetic Regulatory Agency has adopted Sambo (see *Martial Arts*, p. 185) as the style of choice for its agents: It’s businesslike and efficient; includes several techniques that are good for restraining suspects or for use against armored opponents; and the agency was able to find a number of competent instructors living nearby when it was establishing its HQ in Königsberg. This has had the side effect of making the style fashionable among admirers of the agency and some other preservationists – and correspondingly *unpopular* among transhumanists who dislike the GRA!

LEGAL CONCERNS

In a society that is rich in information flow and relatively low on privacy, and where some governments are more than willing to exert their authority, knowledge, including about martial arts, is sometimes subject to control. Skills that make people more dangerous are arguably almost as much of an issue for society as are physical weapons – and weapons are often legally controlled.

Attempts at wholesale regulation of martial-arts training are mostly limited to highly restrictive societies – CR5+, in *GURPS* terms – although a CR4 society might have some kind of licensing system for teachers, or maybe treat combat-training software as a dangerous form of publication. Styles oriented toward fitness and artistry are mostly seen as harmless, and unarmed self-defense styles are widely tolerated. Even quite restrictive governments see these as preferable to having the citizenry insisting on carrying weapons for self-defense, while still leaving the weapon-armed (and hopefully properly trained) police and army with a decisive advantage. However, distinctly military styles – especially those including firearms use or encompassing high-lethality close combat arts – may be treated as distinctly military matters. They may not be as strictly controlled as guns or explosives, but schools may be watched by the authorities and shut down on minimal excuse, and training software may be subject to legal restrictions.

The last holds true even in many tolerant societies, as a matter of public safety and with some logic. Software that teaches people how to maim and kill does make them more of a danger to others, if they are aggressive or unthinking enough to use these skills too casually. The same goes for training in old-fashioned schools and dojos, but there, a human instructor can emphasize the need for restraint and self-control, and hopefully look out for psychologically unstable would-be students. High-quality but nonsapient training software, meanwhile, can be used by anyone. Hence, it is sometimes subject to various degrees of legal control or voluntary limits applied by designers and vendors who want to avoid legal restrictions or bad PR.

Some martial arts are entangled with subtler memetic issues. Aside from their use by various revolutionary movements throughout history, some styles traditionally include training in philosophical or religious ideas, which may not be approved of by restrictive governments. When a martial art is entangled with a “subversive” memplex, the authorities may clamp down on schools and teachers, even if the art itself isn’t particularly dangerous. In the 20th century, this sort of thing led the Chinese government to promote Wushu (*Martial Arts*, pp. 206-207) over more traditional styles, and this sort of thinking persists in China even 2100, although old-fashioned kung fu forms are now generally tolerated on Earth. On Mars, while the martial arts are too popular as a hobby to suppress, some of them are associated with the criminal and political underworlds, leading to a certain amount of monitoring and official distrust.

Elsewhere, the spread of training software and VR has meant that some styles have become widespread despite what the authorities might want. In controlled but violent societies – or controlled societies

that people *think* are violent, whatever the facts – particular highly combative styles may become fashionable from time to time, and some students of imported training software may prove dedicated and competent enough to become effective styl-ists. More than one old military training system has been found, dusted off, updated to run on modern hardware, and ended up as the self-defense system of choice somewhere continents and generations away from its original creation. However, this sort of thing sometimes runs into another legal complication.

Trademarked and Copyrighted Styles

A peculiar development that began to emerge as early as the 20th century, but which has come to something of a fruition in the late 21st, is the idea that a style might be subject to intellectual property laws. In the early days, trademarks might protect style *names*; see *Style™* in *Martial Arts* (p. 27).



This practice has survived to 2100, albeit with predictable levels of complication, legal activity, argument, and international dispute, all accruing over the decades. In brief, when a style name has been trademarked, it's more or less certain that it will have a penumbra of instructors (from frauds to true experts who merely resent paying the license fees) teaching the style without *openly* admitting to the fact, while being watched closely by the trademark-holder's lawyers. Meanwhile, other instructors and schools attempt to establish the credibility of functionally identical styles with alternative names.

A more recent and even more controversial development is the idea that a style might be *copyrighted*. In previous centuries, this would have been laughed out of court, because a martial-arts style is little more than an idea, and as the legal maxim goes, you can't copyright an idea, only the *expression* of an idea. You certainly can't copyright kicking, punching, or grappling. However, in 2100, with the growth of detailed software-aided analysis of combat styles, some teachers have tried to argue that they can and should be allowed to copyright their particular forms as detailed *expressions* of more

*Sniping used to be the art of killing
from a distance. Nowadays, it has to
be the art of killing from an absence.*

– The Royal Marines
Instructors' Manual, 2097

general principles. A number of cases have come to court, although most were lost when the defendants showed large bodies of prior art, helped by testimony from well-regarded martial artists who treat the whole idea of copyrighted styles with distaste. The joke in the martial-arts world is that some people *are* trying to copyright punching and kicking. A few cases have been won, though – and in each instance, extensive information on the newly protected style has almost immediately shown up on the TSA Web. This is threatening to lead some governments, including China, to associate parts of the martial-arts hobby with nanosocialism.

OFF EARTH

As significant human communities have developed beyond Earth's atmosphere, martial arts have come along. In places where conditions have been established that are closely akin to those on Earth, teachers and schools simply continue to spread the same established terrestrial styles. For example, schools on Margaret Station happily teach several "karate" and "judo" styles that would have been completely familiar in a 20th-century dojo. In other cases, where practical conditions are less Earthlike, martial arts have perforce adapted, for example adding the Free Fall lens (p. 20).

At the very least, fighters trained in different gravity conditions tend to display subtly different patterns of reflexes, making their use of traditional styles look subtly "off" to observers from Earth. The other point to note is that unarmed styles are the ones that have so far traveled best; even when a style only employs weapons that would be fairly harmless to the structure of a ship or station, weapons have mass, and mass is money in space travel. However, cheaper transport costs and local manufacturing facilities are gradually beginning to reduce this bias.

NEW LENSES

Developments in the ways that martial arts are used are reflected in the teaching methods. These new lenses can be applied to any pre-existing martial-arts style, or to any in the next section, just like the lenses in *Martial Arts* (pp. 144-145).

Bodyguard

In 2100, as throughout the century, most effective bodyguards use guns and good planning rather than unarmed combat. However, governments and transport organizations that restrict weapons ownership – and enforce this rule with high-tech scanners – won't always make an exception for someone who's worried enough to employ a bodyguard. In addition, hiring a "martial-arts adept" is sometimes just plain fashionable among the very wealthy, especially on Mars (where the Triads set many fashions, and weapons are often restricted). A bodyguard from a big-name or cool-sounding school is particularly prestigious. Hence, many such schools, and many security companies, offer appropriate courses – even including skills that make the bodyguard genuinely useful.

Start with any style that seems reasonably plausible for a serious bodyguard – pure sports forms make poor choices, as do any styles that depend on bulky weapons – and add

Observation, plus one of Guns (Pistol) or Beam Weapons (Pistol) if the style doesn't include either of those. Combat Art/Sport, Games, and Savoir-Faire (Dojo) become optional, although stylish bodyguards usually learn them if they're required by the core style. Fast-Draw for pistols and any weapons covered by the style, and Intimidation skill, also become available as options. Techniques such as Jump Kick or Sacrifice Throw – which take the bodyguard out of position for his primary task of protecting the client – are rarely trained above default.

Free Fall

Many styles have been adapted for use in microgravity and free fall by dedicated enthusiasts who found themselves living in space. The success of such attempts has varied considerably from case to case – some styles are just plain better for the purpose than others – but some work just fine. Noted successes are adaptations of Escrima and Jujutsu; it's been said that Sumo is probably the only style that will never be attempted in free fall. It is also possible to combine this with another lens to create a modified style for self-defense, military use, bodyguarding, etc., in zero G.

Start with any style (except Sumo), and add Free Fall to its required skills and Vacc Suit to the optional list. If it includes Acrobatics as a required or optional skill, change that to Aerobatics. If it includes Riding or Sumo Wrestling, delete those skills and any techniques based on or requiring them. The same goes for Immovable Stance and Lizard Climb among the cinematic skills. Likewise, delete Elbow Drop, Ground Fighting, Knee Drop, Low Fighting, Sacrifice Throw, Stamp Kick, and Trip from the style's standard techniques, if they are present, and Piledriver from its cinematic techniques.

All this assumes that the adapted style is learned purely for use in free fall. If the school, dojo, or training software also teaches methods for fighting under gravity, all skills and techniques that the lens deletes or changes are restored as options, and G-Experience becomes an optional advantage. This also tends to make a style complex and hard to learn.

Trained in VR

Training that has been more or less entirely conducted in virtual reality (see the boxed text, below) doesn't necessarily mean that students are less effective in a fight, although this is quite often combined with the *Trained by a Fraud* lens (*Martial Arts*, p. 145). However, the students may not be accustomed to the gritty realities of combat, or have advanced *very* far in the style. They're unlikely to have more than a couple of points in any one skill or technique, unless they trained as full-time members of a military organization. They may have disadvantages such as Combat Paralysis, Low Pain Threshold, or Overconfidence – or a negative Reputation among more traditionalist students of the style for being flashy and naïve. Also, add Electronics Operation (Communications) as an optional skill.

Finding a Teacher

As in past eras, the would-be student of a martial art in 2100 still needs to find a competent tutor. However, advanced technology and communications put several new twists on this. So long as a teacher is available at all and doesn't mind being found, a quick Web search can locate someone suitable, complete with supporting information about the combat style, plus some nice video images of classes, testimonials from happy students, and so on. A little more digging will usually find any negative comments that also exist and that can pass legal checking filters. A good memetic analysis can strip out most manipulative advertising double-talk – although some schools employ very good memeticists to write their advertising.

Although teachers in many subjects regard the idea of actually being in the same physical place as a student as superfluous, even quaint, martial-arts teachers are frequently exceptions to this; hand-to-hand combat is a very *physical* business, and conducting training in virtual reality just doesn't feel right. However, some teachers disagree, especially if they're based in Fifth Wave areas with state-of-the-art VR and slinky systems – and most teachers tolerate the use of select VR “textbooks” and software aides to assist supplementary solo practice.

Pure VR Courses

In truth, TL10 virtual reality is good enough to be used for effective martial-arts training – it actually became good enough at TL9 – but it must be used correctly and carefully. (At TL9, the process requires even more skill and understanding of the medium.) Both teacher and students must have VII or uplink and downlink implants or the equivalent, or wear full-body deluxe VR suits and use a special “VR chamber” in which to move around a lot. They also need high-quality avatars with augmented kinesthetic feedback (occupying 2 GB and costing at least \$50 each). Any significant lag is unacceptable; a teacher on Earth can't really teach students in orbit or on other continents. The kind GM can permit a little basic teaching over inferior links, but at penalties.

AI Tutors

Another possibility is the use of a skilled AI as a trainer, in virtual reality or in the physical world. Not many AIs have attained mastery of the martial arts, but it's technically possible, using the right cybershell or VR avatar. Some military and police forces certainly use NAIs to conduct combat training, which may encompass a basic military style. “Real” martial-arts training generally needs the imaginative flexibility of at least a LAI, though. In addition, an AI with high-end skill set interface capability can work with Style Trainer software (p. 37) to become an effective tutor. That aside, note that, say, a LAI-6 with Teaching-12, two Hard combat skills at 14, and four perks – an absolute minimum specification for a useful martial-arts tutor – costs \$10,600, before buying the processor it runs on and any cybershells or VR constructs needed for the training. Although a significant investment for an individual, it is within budget for many organizations.

Trained by a Master?

If a *Transhuman Space* campaign includes cinematic martial arts, finding a “Master to be Trained By” should be at least as much of an adventure as ever. True Masters should be smart, evasive, and strange enough to avoid showing up instantly on Web searches, or very hard to distinguish from the frauds, competent and commercially alert but unremarkable routine teachers, and plain crazies. Whether or not Trained by a Master is available, the “Secret Martial-Arts School” meme is strong and persistent enough for some people to find ways to exploit it. Indeed, sorting the reality from the myth might require a degree of memetic skill. Legends of AI masters even exist, who reside on obscure servers behind strange firewalls . . .

Some styles have known founders who are still alive; see *Famous Masters in 2100* (p. 9) for examples. Note that few of them give lessons, whatever their skills might be.

NEW STYLES

The following are some of the more widespread or interesting styles that have appeared in the century leading up to 2100 and that are still available at that date. These are *mostly* fully developed and established styles, intended for use by fighters with more or less human physiology and abilities. Some very new, incomplete styles that are still under development at this date are far more exotic and peculiar, being adapted for use by nonhumanoid cybershells or uplifted animals. See, for example, *Canine Police Combat* in *Transhuman Mysteries* (p. 11).

ARC-P

4 points

Throughout the early decades of the 21st century, the U.S. Army frequently found itself engaging in police actions and “operations other than warfare” all across the planet. A recurrent feature of these activities was a need to handle rioting (or simply unruly) crowds of civilians – more or less hostile, not generally armed with lethal weapons, in conditions where the use of lethal force would be politically inexpedient at best, illegal and catastrophic at worst. Conventionally trained soldiers were grossly ill-equipped to handle such things. Although the Army responded by borrowing tactics and techniques from civilian police, these situations were always seen as a painful nuisance.

In 2042, a young staff captain, Martin Ballantine, proposed a consolidation and improvement of the doctrines that had evolved in the Army to handle riot-control situations, using the latest VR training technology. The curriculum he designed focused on teamwork, riot shield use in a group context, stances and moves that enable the group to hold back large groups of protesters or other agitated civilians, and basic use of riot-control batons. Additional sections covered other less-than-lethal weapons and arrest methods borrowed from police training.

Ballantine’s proposal was approved, and the VR course he designed, “Army Riot Control Procedures,” was released in 2043 and soon installed in every Army training establishment. It might have been forgotten after a few years, except that it was eventually identified as the first of the Virtual Arts; mentions in the history books earned it a certain mystique. As it was a well-designed course, many military and police forces still use derivatives in their training. Bizarre stories and barroom legends suggest that small groups of experts can hold back entire mobs of rioters, and exaggerate the calm demeanor of a competent professional into a stony utter fearlessness (so Unfazeable becomes an optional advantage in cinematic games).

Several variants and copies of this style exist in 2100. Some organizations consider the use of batons (and even stun wands, p. 33, which have become widespread in riot control) to be out of date or clumsy, or think that they allow opponents to get too close. These groups prefer to emphasize ranged weaponry of various sorts – make both Shortsword and Tonfa optional, replacing them in the core of the style with either Liquid Projector (Sprayer) or Guns (Grenade Launcher or Shotgun). Others simply favor bigger sticks (change Shortsword or Tonfa to Broadsword).

Skills: Shield; Shortsword or Tonfa; Sumo Wrestling.

Techniques: Arm Lock (Sword or Tonfa); Armed Grapple; Disarming; Handcuffing (Sumo Wrestling).

Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance; Push.

Perks: Shield-Wall Training; Skill Adaptation (Handcuffing defaults to Sumo Wrestling-1); Teamwork.

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Will.

Advantages: Fearlessness; Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Soldier’s); Duty; Sense of Duty (To unit or team).

Skills: Beam Weapons (any); Brawling; Guns (Grenade Launcher or Shotgun); Liquid Projector (Sprayer); Savoir-Faire (Military or Police); Search; Wrestling.

Techniques: Arm Lock (Wrestling); Jam (Brawling).

BANTU BOXING (BANTUJUTSU)

3 or 6 points

The famous African martial artist Charles “Croc” Makombo founded Bantujutsu in the 2030s and 2040s. He was born somewhere between 1990 and 2000 in Paris, and migrated to NYC in 2018. After a promising career start in professional Boxing and Muay Thai, he astonished the fans by joining the Central African rebel forces of Colonel Thomas Lefevre in the Congo crisis of the 2020s. He soon became one of the leading figures of the war, and was the trainer and commander of Lefevre’s personal guard, the Simba. It was thought that he died with the rest of Lefevre’s personal troops in an ambush in 2029, but he reappeared in Montréal in 2041, where he opened a dojo. In 2072, he moved to Marseille, where he opened his second dojo. His schools taught and perfected his new style, which he forbid to be taught to whites or Asians. It’s a tough but well-developed art, combining raw, damaging power with judo-style elegance when grappling, and teaching a full range of fist strikes. Fighters are expected to meet strength with strength, although opponents who use skilled kicks are usually countered by grappling.

On August 1, 2086, Makombo retired and left the dojos and his martial art to his nephew, Anthony Proudhomme. On August 3, Makombo apparently died while swimming in the Mediterranean, but his body was never found. Anthony Proudhomme soon opened the dojos to students of all ethnic backgrounds, including whites and Asians. Some of Croc’s senior students grumble about this “perversion” and “selling out” of the style to this day.

Bantujutsu is taught in two very distinct stages; only advanced students (First Dan or higher) of the “Warrior-Style” can learn the “Chief-Style.” At all levels, Bantujutsu is an art that emphasizes physical power, and tries to take advantage of a combatant’s size, body mass, and sheer strength. Consequently, many practitioners possess powerful physiques – either by birth, training, or design.

However, Makombo also sought to integrate some ideas from “internal” styles to produce a well-rounded “thinking warrior.” To avoid having too many students arrested for misjudged use of the style, and to help them in standing up to authority, schools traditionally offer lectures on basic legal principles and what to do if arrested, although this information doesn’t always stick.

Bantujutsu teachers strenuously suppress stories about cinematic abilities, emphasizing that this is a serious art for *real* fighters in a kill-or-be-killed world, but a few wild stories inevitably circulate. Indeed, among Bantujutsu students, a rumor exists about a secret third stage, the “Witchdoctor-” or “Shaman-Style.” Whether this third style exists – and if it does, what it consists of – is left to the GM; one possibility would be to use Unusual Training perks to allow even realistic fighters some access to cinematic options.

Warrior-Style

Skills: Boxing; Judo.

Techniques: Arm Lock; Breakfall; Choke Hold; Counterattack (Boxing); Finger Lock; Ground Fighting (Judo); Head Lock; Neck Snap; Targeted Attack (Boxing Punch/Face); Targeted Attack (Judo Grapple/Arm); Targeted Attack (Judo Throw/Neck); Uppercut.

Perks: Clinch (Boxing); Neck Control (Boxing); Power Grappling; Teamwork.

Optional Traits

Attributes: Improved ST.

Advantages: Combat biomods; Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold.

Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Callous; Intolerance (Racial).

Skills: Autohypnosis; Breath Control; Karate; Law (Local Area: Criminal); Meditation; Sumo Wrestling; Throwing. Additionally, all Chief-Style primary skills (see below) can be considered optional for Warrior-Style.

Techniques: Knee Strike (Karate).

Chief-Style Additions

This is only taught to students who have the full Warrior-Style training. It is not a full style in itself, and it doesn’t have a separate Style Familiarity perk. Smallsword is included for use with the short staff, a popular weapon among stylists.

Skills: Smallsword; Staff; *one of* Axe/Mace, Broadsword, Main-Gauche, or Tonfa.

Techniques: Aggressive Parry (Boxing); Armed Grapple (any required weapon skill); Back Strike (Staff); Close Combat (any required weapon skill); Feint (Staff); Hook (Axe/Mace); Retain Weapon (Staff); Sweep (Staff); Targeted Attack (any required weapon skill/Neck); Targeted Attack (Staff Swing/Leg).

Cinematic Skills: Power Blow.

Cinematic Techniques: Backbreaker (ST); Piledriver; Whirlwind Attack (Boxing or Staff).

Perks: Iron Hands; Iron Neck; Off-Hand Weapon Training (any required weapon skill); Quick-Swap (any required weapon skill); Skill Adaptation (Piledriver can take Judo instead of Wrestling as its prerequisite).

Optional Traits

Skills: Any weapon skill available but not chosen as required is still available for later study.

BATTLEDRESS TRAINING

5 points

Battlesuit use, in a general sense, is a basic part of human infantry training in any Fifth or high Fourth Wave army. Typically, power-armor troops perform a kind of tactical command function on the battlefield. Although they are certainly dangerous in a shoot-out, AI-controlled military cybershells are equally effective, and losing those is cheaper and less controversial. Because power armor permits human troops (especially leaders) to venture close to the front lines with a better chance of survival, and to carry a lot of support gear and weapons, their job is primarily to provide local command initiative. Despite their main purpose, these troops have performed heroically and effectively in personal combat, when the need arose.

The basics of power armor use are covered by Battlesuit skill, plus weapon skills and Soldier. However, armies issuing such expensive gear like to be sure that it will be used properly, and so have evolved formalized training courses. This style represents a typical course of this kind. It covers battlesuit use and marksmanship, as well as comms and remote control of mini-cybershells and cyberswarms, which are often regarded as the most important parts of the course.

The discipline of the new war machines was businesslike rather than pedantic . . .

*– H.G. Wells,
“The Land Ironclads”*

Reflecting the nature of this training in the reality of 2100, cinematic battlesuit experts are often shown as tactical wizards who can coordinate hordes of supporting units, although wilder InVids persist in presenting them as one-man armies who can blast through any obstruction. Unfortunately, this sort of imagery, and the feeling of being inside an indestructible shell, does sometimes lead battlesuit troopers into overconfidence.

Skills: Battlesuit; Electronics Operation (Communications); Guns (Grenade Launcher, Gyroc, or LAW); Guns (Rifle).

Techniques: Comms Multitasking (p. 15); Limpet Mine Attachment (DX) (p. 15); Quick-Shot.

Perks: Armorer’s Gift (for any appropriate skill in the style); Army of One (p. 12); Cookie Cutter (pp. 12-13); Cross-Trained.

Optional Traits

Advantages: Allies (Supporting combat infomorphs); Brain Booster nanosymbionts; Combat Reflexes; Military Rank.

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Soldier’s); Duty; Overconfidence.

Skills: Armoury (Battlesuits); Camouflage; Computer Operation; Electronics Operation (EW, Security, or Surveillance); Electronics Repair (any); Forward Observer; Gunner (any); Guns (any); Savoir-Faire (Military); Soldier; Tactics.

COCERDELM

3 points

This is a military hand-to-hand style, developed and used by the armies of various South American TSA members. This gives it a certain mystique among nanosocialist sympathizers, although in fact, it resembles other styles taught by military forces of several different nations aligned with various power blocs and political philosophies. The name is simply short for “Combate Cercano de los Militares” – “Military Close Combat.”

The basis of this system is the recognition that, at the end of the 21st century, even irregular and insurgent opponents may be wearing very effective armor, especially on the torso. This may not protect perfectly against firearms, but it will certainly negate any punch thrown by an unarmed fighter. The style therefore concentrates on arm locks, leg sweeps, and to a lesser extent, face and limb strikes. Ground-fighting tricks are included because this sort of fight does sometimes go to the floor, and most training sessions are held on rough ground, not artificially smooth training mats. Advanced students have a large repertoire of techniques, although most fighters limit themselves to two or three moves chosen to suit their own physiques.

Cocerdelmi takes a meticulous approach to leverage and grappling methods, while its punches and kicks are simple and functional. A common pattern of attacks (which can be used as the basis of a Combination) consists of a sweep or throw followed by a Stamp Kick against the prone foe – to the face if that’s unprotected, otherwise to the legs to prevent him getting up again. Training also emphasizes fast, decisive responses to emergencies – “he who hesitates, dies.” Armchair sympathizers with the cause are the main source of stories about superhuman jungle fighters with vast reserves of strength, able to defeat opponents with their uncanny grappling skills, even in total darkness.

Skills: Brawling; Judo.

Techniques: Arm or Wrist Lock; Choke Hold; Disarming; Ground Fighting; Head Lock; Jam; Knee Strike; Stamp Kick; Sweep; Targeted Attack (Brawling Punch/Face); Targeted Attack (Brawling Stamp Kick/Face or Legs); Wrench Arm.

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting; Power Blow; Pressure Points.

Cinematic Techniques: Backbreaker; Timed Defense (Judo Parry).

Perks: Armor Familiarity (Judo); Ground Guard; Special Setup (Brawling Parry > Arm Lock); Sure-Footed (Uneven).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Higher Purpose (Defend Nanosocialism).

Disadvantages: Intolerance (“Info-Capitalists”); Sense of Duty (Nanosocialists).

Skills: Axe/Mace; Fast-Draw (Knife or Pistol); Guns; Knife; Shortsword; Soldier; Survival (Jungle or Mountain).

Techniques: Retain Weapon (Gun or Knife); Targeted Attack (Knife Thrust/Arm, Face, Neck, or Groin).

COUNTERMECH TRAINING

4 points

This style represents a range of training regimes developed for use by human or bioroid fighters who might find themselves engaged with RATS or power-armored opponents at close quarters. They’re generally taught by the military,

although some civilians – mostly paranoid cyber-phobes – also seek to learn them. As such, Countermech Training is even more of a style of desperation than most military forms; lightly protected humans tackling modern combat machines mostly tend to die, very quickly. Stylists are taught to use what advantages they can, but mostly to try to *get away*. Nonetheless, this is a functional style, quite effective against organic as well as inorganic opponents, and some armies teach something on these lines as their standard close combat form.

The creators of this style went to great lengths to strip away many traditional martial-arts ideas. Anything predicated on the assumption that the opponent has specifically human features had to be ruthlessly eliminated, and some experienced martial artists have had to unlearn many habits when studying it. Strangleholds and targeted attacks aimed at human weak spots are likely to be worse than useless, even against humanoid cybershells, although skilled fighters may sometimes go for a shell’s camera “eyes.” The same goes for sweeps and trips, given the number of wheeled or multi-legged cybershells that exist. Targeted Attacks against chinks in armor might work, but are a distinctly cinematic option in this context; properly designed combat robots may well not have such flaws. In any case, the penalty to hit is likely to be overwhelming for a realistic fighter. Perhaps just as importantly, robots can’t easily be intimidated or defeated psychologically, and combat designs neither feel pain nor have much of an analogue for it. Countermech trainers see esoteric ideas about pressure points or *chi* as laughable, even in highly cinematic games.

Big guns they can walk round. You can’t shift big guns to keep pace with them and little guns in the open they rush. I saw ’em rushed. You might do a surprise now and then – assassinate the brutes, perhaps –

– H.G. Wells, “The Land Ironclads”

Instead, stylists concentrate on basic principles of leverage, study different types of cybershell in search of weaknesses, and make as much use as they can of weapons that might serve their purposes (see Chapter 4). Fighters usually work on the principle that they should get out of any combat situation as soon as possible. If they’ve got a ranged weapon that can damage the robot, they should hang onto it and try to buy enough space to use it properly. Going to very close quarters with a robot is usually a bad idea; many robots have multiple limbs, superhuman strength, or built-in blades, and *will* win a grappling match. Fighters learn elbow and knee strikes to use if they are forced to close quarters, hopefully discommoding the robot for a moment while the human moves away.

Hence, this is taught very much as a striking style. Students start by learning basic punches and kicks (Brawling skill, which has the advantages of being quick to learn and of not worrying about encumbrance), then move on to disciplined karate punches and kicks intended to maximize hitting power if they have time and inclination to complete a full course.

However, most stylists fight very defensively, using Defensive Attack (especially with weapons) or All-Out Defense and an array of techniques that are designed to avoid close engagement and open the gap. Some instructors emphasize Push Kick, and a retreating Karate parry is a common move. This leads to the seeming paradox of a self-preservative style that concentrates on striking skills; many arts that emphasize self-protection focus on Judo, but they're designed to defend against *humans*. Still, some versions of this style add Judo to the optional skill list, especially if users often have to fight humanoid robots or human battlesuit troops; these also add Breakfall (Judo) and Evade (Judo) to the list of optional techniques.

Other skills and techniques are included in the style's options list to work with common anti-robot weapons. Many training regimes move the skills or techniques (such as Hammer Fist) for particular weapons from the optional to the main part of the style. Robotic opponents with no more than human strength and mass may be slammed or battered aside or bowled over, giving the human a chance to get away or deliver a weapon attack; variant styles that focus on this add Sumo Wrestling to their core skills.

Cinematic "robot hunters" in InVids are usually assumed to have a real chance of actually damaging their opponents, and so fight rather more aggressively – though even they may focus on defense for the first moments of a fight, until they have the measure of a new mechanical opponent. They also tend to show off their defensive skills against bigger machines, making any robot look like a lumbering joke, then use exotic weapons or devastatingly powerful strikes with pinpoint accuracy to shatter or bypass armor, leaving heaps of dismantled scrap in their wake. (The GM might add Targeted Attack against chinks in armor to such a fighter's technique list.) They may also be highly acrobatic. Against hordes of small, weak robots, they'll probably use Whirlwind Attack. While hand or weapon parries can work against robots, cinematic stylists may prefer to focus on dramatic but effective dodges; even cinematic robot opponents tend to be too tough to wrestle! Fancy cinematic fighters may even use baton-format weapons with elegant fencing techniques. Alternatively, such weapons may be constructed in the shape of side-handled batons, used with Tonfa skill. For a multi-use weapon, try a tonfa with a different high-tech-weapon payload mounted at each end of the baton.

The *most* cinematic fighters are sometimes depicted using devastating karate chops against robots. This would theoretically be represented by an Exotic Hand Strike or maybe Lethal Strike, but in reality and with the rules as written, using such techniques with an empty hand against an armored robot is likely to be dangerous and painful. Rather, treat this as an ordinary strike, probably enhanced by Breaking Blow or Power Blow, with the appearance of the thing being a special effect. Alternatively, such fighters may have the Iron Hands perk (probably twice) and so be able to learn and apply those techniques relatively safely.

Skills: Brawling; Expert Skill (Robotics) (see p. 14); Karate.

Techniques: Back Kick; Elbow Strike (Brawling); Kicking; Knee Strike (Brawling); Push Kick.

Il Ballo di Salute

3 points

Il Ballo di Salute ("The Dance of Health") is a remnant of a past age – one of the last surviving fitness arts (see p. 7). It was developed in the 1930s by a group of European fitness teachers, who combined aerobic dance-based exercises with elements from various artistic styles, T'ai Chi, and yoga. Initially, they deliberately eliminated all elements of Eastern mysticism from their borrowings, but these were soon replaced by even larger elements of different, mostly "New Age" mysticism.

The style has in fact survived to 2100 largely because of the mystical pseudo-philosophy that now surrounds it, which makes it very popular with a particular audience – although some practitioners study it for quite sensible reasons. Critics call it "The Path of the Endorphin High," and some stylists are prone to pushing their bodies to their limits, whether for philosophical reasons or in pursuit of "the burn." Instructors can be found in most large urban or quasi-urban areas on Earth, and one or two are on Mars. The number of stylists is hard to estimate, partly because so many are casual dabblers, partly because quite a few devotees are members of isolated communities.

Realistically, the style has no significant combat value, and all respectable *Ballo* instructors make this completely clear to students. At best, some learn a set of moves based on artistic martial-arts kata and a few careful demonstrations of leverage. Still, it teaches some useful noncombat skills and a certain amount of agility (especially on smooth dance floors). It also provides general practical fitness maintenance for those who can't or won't use high-tech methods for the purpose. Few students actually acquire the Style Familiarity perk; they simply pick up the style's core skills. However, if the wilder myths surrounding the style are true, advanced adepts display something akin to ESP and psychic body control, as well as know subtle arts of movement and pressure (requiring *GURPS Psionic Powers* or *GURPS Powers* to represent these abilities).

Skills: Dancing; Meditation.

Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance; Mental Strength; Power Blow; Push; Sensitivity.

Perks: Chi Resistance (any); Sure-Footed (Slippery).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Fit.

Disadvantages: Compulsive Exercising (as a quirk); Disciplines of Faith (Mysticism); Oblivious; Pacifism.

Skills: Hobby Skill (New Age Philosophizing); Karate Art; Running; Savoir-Faire (Dojo); Sumo Wrestling Art.

Techniques: Push Kick (Karate Art).

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow; Power Blow; Push.

Cinematic Techniques: Flying Jump Kick; Roll with Blow; Springing Attack (Karate); Whirlwind Attack.

Perks: Armor Familiarity; Cool Under Fire (p. 13); Improvised Weapons (Brawling); Rapid Retraction (Kicks or Punches); Style Adaptation (usually for a military style, but possibly for some types of Karate or other "hard" styles).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Dodge; Enhanced Parry; Military biomods.

Disadvantages: Duty; Intolerance (AIs).

Skills: Acrobatics; Armoury (Body Armor, or anything relating to standard anti-robot weapons); Fast-Draw (anything useful for robot fighting); Guns (any); Liquid Projector (Sprayer); Shortsword; Smallsword; Soldier; Sumo Wrestling; Tonfa; Two-Handed Axe/Mace.

Techniques: Breakfall (Acrobatics); Close Combat (any optional Melee Weapon skill); Close-Quarters Battle (any); Evade; Hammer Fist; Limpet Mine Attachment (p. 15); Retain Weapon (any); Targeted Attack (Liquid Projector (Sprayer)/Eyes); Targeted Attack (Shortsword Thrust/Eyes).

Perks: Improvised Weapons (Two-Handed Axe/Mace); Suit Familiarity.

FREEFIGHTING

5 points

This style is described in *Martial Arts* (p. 210); it fits very well in the *Transhuman Space* setting, and so the mechanics are repeated here for convenience, with some small additions. Note that practitioners who operate mostly or entirely in free fall are likely to choose Aerobatics rather than Acrobatics from the options, while Kumo parahumans and anyone who's had a radical biomod to replace his legs with arms will learn Elbow Strike rather than Knee Strike. Suit Familiarity is actually quite rare among freefighters in 2100, because available TL10 vacc suits don't restrict wearers enough to need special training!

Note that military spacers may learn Military Zero-G (p. 28) or something similar, rather than this style, while freefighting forms of other styles can be defined by applying the Free Fall lens (p. 20) to the standard form. Hishôjutsu (below) is another option for spacers, especially those with connections to Mars.

Skills: Brawling; Free Fall; Judo; Vacc Suit.

Techniques: Arm Lock; Disarming (Judo); Handcuffing; Knee Strike.

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting; Sensitivity.

Cinematic Techniques: Binding; Roll with Blow.

Perks: Lower Arm Blindside (p. 13); Suit Familiarity (Vacc Suit).

Optional Traits

Advantages: 3D Spatial Sense; Enhanced Dodge; Perfect Balance; "Spacer" biomods.

Skills: Acrobatics; Aerobatics; Climbing; Fast-Draw (Knife or Sword); Jumping; Karate; Knife; Shortsword.

HISHÔJUTSU ("FLIGHT ART")

5 points

This style was founded in the 2060s by Paul Sayama, a young master of mixed heritage (his father was German-Japanese, while his mother was of Chinese-Brazilian heritage), who practiced Shorinji Kempo, Wushu, Capoeira, and Savate. He was based on Mars from 2056 onward, and opened his school in Port Lowell in 2063. He had worked as a farhauler until 2061, which, together with the increasingly tense situation on Mars after

2058, inspired him to develop techniques to take advantage of the possibilities of a low-gravity environment. Although the style is at least as popular on Mars as in space (and has devotees on Luna, too), its teachers insist that zero-G techniques are central. Students who can't get out of gravity wells may use deep immersion virtual reality training, preferably with a VII (or, even better, slinky) implant, to study how to fight in free fall.

Hishôjutsu in action is a spectacular style, with lots of wide-ranging jump kicks, somersaults and leaps – but the training often includes the use of tools as improvised weapons, precise attacks on vulnerable parts of the body (or a vacc suit) and the use of the boomstick (see pp. 32-33). The style was an almost immediate success. While some martial artists on Earth like to belittle Hishôjutsu as a "circus style" (just as a few space-based freefighters dismiss Hishôjutsu as compromised by all the training for fighting in gravity wells), Sayama's art now has enough practitioners, from Luna to the Belt, who will gladly show anyone that on *their* turf, Hishôjutsu reigns supreme.

Skills: Acrobatics; Free Fall; Jumping; Karate.

Techniques: Acrobatic Stand; Attack from Above; Breakfall; Drop Kick (Karate); Evade; Feint; Jump Kick; Kicking; Push Kick; Targeted Attack (Karate Punch/Face or Groin).

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting; Flying Leap; Light Walk; Power Blow; Push.

Cinematic Techniques: Flying Jump Kick; Lethal Kick; Roll with Blow; Springing Attack.

Perks: Acrobatic Feints; Combat Jumping (p. 12); Free-Fall Roll (p. 12); Improvised Weapons (Karate); Skill Adaptation (Drop Kick defaults to Karate-1); Suit Familiarity (NBC Suit or Vacc Suit).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Andraste and "spacer" biomods; Combat Reflexes; G-Experience; Improved G-Tolerance.

Skills: Brawling; Judo; Performance; Shortsword; Smallsword; Stealth; Vacc Suit.

Techniques: Targeted Attack (Shortsword or Smallsword Thrust/Vitals).

MARGARETIAN KARATE

3 points

Dancing Crane Studios and a number of spin-off groups and independent instructors offer instruction in a wide range of martial-arts styles on Margaret Station (*High Frontier*, pp. 102-106). Additionally, many instructors have spent time on the station.

Contrary to popular myth, no specific "Margaretian" style currently exists. Dancing Crane has always preferred to teach whatever styles are fashionable or best suited to each student's needs, and the zero-G styles developed on the station have quickly spread beyond (most can be represented by Freefighting, above). However, this situation may be changing. A number of instructors on the station have collaborated informally to develop a standardized training regime to meet the most usual requests they receive from students – for effective self-defense and fitness training, for useful bodyguard skills, and for techniques to use in mixed martial-arts competitions.

This synthetic style is still under development, and doesn't even have a universally agreed name yet; "Margaretian Karate" is merely the most popular nickname. However, it's an appropriate label, and may well stick.

Derived Styles

The following are examples of derived fictional arts (see p. 8).

Althasian Iffjurr-Laur

4 points

League Combat (below), the style of the heroes of the InVid *Starburst Station*, was shown as the practical combat training of tough but sensible people – but the “Althasian” villains of the show, being an obsessive warrior race, went for something more flashy. Their style is notably short on defensive techniques; although League Combat fighters were almost always depicted as being superior one-to-one, the handful of fans on the L5 Starburst Station habitat (*High Frontier*, pp. 126-130) who’ve studied “Iffjurr-Laur” argue that the best defense is always a good offense. Committed and All-Out Attacks are the norm!

Aside from fist-fighting, the style encompasses use of the Althasians’ beloved array of ornate axe/mace-type implements.

Skills: Axe/Mace Art; Karate Art; Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Techniques: Armed Grapple; Choke Hold; Hammer Fist; Head Butt; Hook; Knee Strike; Reverse Grip; Spinning Strike (Axe/Mace Art); Two-Handed Punch (Karate Art).

Cinematic Skills: Immovable Stance.

Cinematic Techniques: Dual-Weapon Attack (Axe/Mace Art); Springing Attack (Axe/Mace Art).

Perks: Biting Mastery; Exotic Weapon Training (Any weird Althasian weapon); Off-Hand Weapon Training (Axe/Mace Art); Quick-Swap (Axe/Mace Art); Skill Adaptation (Two-Handed Punch defaults to Karate Art).

Furusiyya-Prime

5 points

This is the style used by the heroes of *The Golden Jihad* (*Toxic Memes*, pp. 90-91), at least according to some fan-made episodes of the show; the original, “official” series had them employing a rather unremarkable set of standard stage-fighting moves. Furusiyya-Prime combines flamboyant movie combat with elegant swings and parries derived mostly from Western saber fencing and showy close-range pistol shooting (using the show’s weird ray guns, of course). It’s an acrobatic style, certainly entertaining to watch; attacks are typically either Defensive or Committed. A notable feature is a set of moves designed for use from flying carpets; the Mounted Shooting technique in this style doesn’t actually require a vehicle operation skill as a prerequisite, because the flying carpets involved are faked by special effects.

In keeping with the “Jihadi” ethos, serious fans are forever adding new details to this style, and most people who

claim any expertise in the subject are actually engaged in creating their own (combat-heavy) homemade episodes. Plausible variants can add almost any Combat Art skill, especially if it involves a sword of any sort.

Skills: Acrobatics; Beam Weapons Art (Pistol); Brawling Art; Saber Art.

Techniques: Acrobatic Stand; Armed Grapple; Attack from Above; Back Strike; Bind Weapon; Breakfall; Close-Quarters Battle (*Gun Fu*, p. 26); Counterattack; Disarming; Elbow Strike; Evade; Feint; Head Butt; Leg Grapple; Mounted Shooting (Beam Weapons Art (Pistol)/Flying Carpet); Spinning Strike.

Cinematic Skills: Light Walk; Precognitive Parry.

Cinematic Techniques: Flying Lunge; Grand Disarm (Saber Art); Roll with Blow (Brawling Art); Timed Defense (Dodge or Saber Art Parry); Whirlwind Attack.

Perks: Akimbo; Quick-Sheathe (Sword); Sure-Footed (Flying Platform).

Optional Traits

Skills: Broadsword Art; Electronics Operation (Media); Fast-Draw (Pistol or Sword); Group Performance (Fight Choreography); Parry Missile Weapons; Shortsword Art; Stage Combat; Wrestling Art.

League Combat

3 points

This is the fist-fighting style of the heroes of *Starburst Station* (the InVid), now sometimes studied on the like-named L5 station; see also *Althasian Iffjurr-Laur* above. It’s not terribly sophisticated – *Starburst Station* wasn’t a martial-arts series – but those characters were all-round heroes, tough and precise. A couple of League Combat students have achieved moderate success in freestyle martial-arts contests, but analysis shows that they mostly used other, more practical styles, with a few flourishes borrowed from the series.

Skills: Karate Art; Wrestling Art.

Techniques: Aggressive Parry; Arm Lock; Breakfall; Disarming (Karate Art); Elbow Strike; Exotic Hand Strike; Feint; Ground Fighting (Wrestling Art); Hammer Fist; Leg Grapple (Wrestling Art); Push Kick; Trip; Two-Handed Punch (Karate Art).

Cinematic Techniques: Dual-Weapon Defense (Karate Art); Roll with Blow (Karate Art); Timed Defense (Dodge or Karate Art Parry).

Perks: Improvised Weapons (Karate Art); Rapid Retraction (Punches); Skill Adaptation (Two-Handed Punch defaults to Karate Art); Teamwork.

This is a striking-based style owing most to various 20th-century karate forms. It does incorporate a number of grapples and throws, but these are mostly intended to allow the fighter to break out of holds or put an opponent who is attempting to close onto the ground, setting him up for aggressive strikes or giving

the Margaretian fighter time to escape. Indeed, some of the style’s own creators de-emphasize these elements of the style quite strongly; their preferred response to being grappled is to punish the opponent savagely with elbow and knee strikes and head butts until he lets go.

For a style often learned by sports fighters, Margaretian Karate has a surprisingly strong focus on serious combat skills, treating Sport skills as secondary even for students intending to participate in closely regulated competitions. The fact is that instructors take an intense pride in the idea that they teach *effective* self-protection methods (quite a few students learn this style with the Self-Defense lens – *Martial Arts*, p. 145). Additionally, part of the developing philosophy of the style is that even a purely sporting fighter should learn focused aggression. This occasionally leads to problems for fighters who get carried away in sporting bouts being fought under tight rules, especially as many instructors throw a few bluntly practical brawling tricks into their teachings. Moderating this aggressive approach, and in keeping with the general memetic environment on Margaret Station, many instructors steer students into taking meditation classes, as well as emphasizing situational awareness and general physical fitness. Both the Bodyguard and Free Fall lenses (p. 20) are also often applied.

When this style develops a body of legends, it's bound to echo the long-established mythology of karate, full of shattering and disabling blows. This is especially inevitable for a forceful striking style often learned by lightly built women (some of them spacers with low-G physiques); their penchant for aggressive use of punches and kicks is bound to lead to exaggerated stories. A certain notorious recording of a Dancing Crane-trained bodyguard breaking an attacker's neck may also contribute, although she wasn't using this style.

Skills: Judo; Karate.

Techniques: Aggressive Parry; Back Kick; Breakfall; Counterattack (Karate); Disarming (Karate); Elbow Strike; Feint (Karate); Head Butt; Jam; Kicking; Knee Strike; Stamp Kick; Sweep.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow; Mental Strength; Power Blow; Pressure Points; Pressure Secrets; Sensitivity.

Cinematic Techniques: Lethal Kick; Lethal Strike; Pressure-Point Strike; Springing Attack; Whirlwind Attack.

Perks: Improved Weapons (Karate); Rapid Retraction (Punches or Kicks).

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Per and FP.

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Fearlessness; Fit.

Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Delusions ("A male conspiracy seeks to oppress women"); Duty (Bodyguarding client); Intolerance (Male chauvinism or Lack of physical fitness – either are usually just quirks); Obsession (Sporting success or Fighting "the patriarchy").

Skills: Brawling; Judo Sport; Karate Sport; Liquid Projector (Sprayer); Meditation; Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Perks: Style Familiarity (any other unarmed style).

MARTIAN SWORDPLAY

3 points

Quite a few of the Chinese war veterans and other wild-eyed romantics who've adopted the name of the *xieh* (*xia*) on Mars (see *In the Well*, p. 84) have taken to wearing swords – just because. The widely preferred sword type is the Chinese jian (*Martial Arts*, pp. 217, 227, and 229), although some carry blades of all shapes and sizes. Most of them use these swords, if at all, with Broadsword skill at default, but a small number

have gone to the trouble of developing and learning an actual martial art. Fewer than 10 serious stylists reside on the entire planet. However, they are proud of themselves, and the fame of the style is spreading; those who can teach it with any conviction are acquiring followers.

The style borrows from traditional Chinese sword forms, directly and by way of old movies and modern InVids. It also includes quite a lot from Japanese Kenjutsu and Western fencing schools (again partly via the mass media). Its developers are tacitly honest enough to use whatever works best, and Western rapier styles offer a set of techniques that adapt well to the jian. All of the current serious stylists have backgrounds in other martial arts, especially Zhua (see p. 31). They could reliably be expected to employ that style's characteristic nimble approach, should they ever actually be drawn into a real fight with blade in hand. The style's own growing mythology is inevitably that of the super-agile swordsman.

It's entirely possible that this style will be absorbed and subsumed into Zhua as time goes on – or it may evolve into an elegant pure art style, given that the opportunities for serious sword-fighting remain fairly limited on Mars.

Skills: Rapier; Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

Techniques: Back Strike; Bind Weapon; Counterattack; Feint; Targeted Attack (Rapier Thrust/Neck or Vitals).

Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting; Flying Leap.

Cinematic Techniques: Flying Lunge; Grand Disarm; Timed Defense (Rapier Parry); Whirlwind Attack.

Perks: Drunken Fighting; Sure-Footed (Uneven).

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Basic Speed.

Advantages: Andraste and combat biomods; Combat Reflexes; DNA Repair and Nerve Booster nanosymbionts.

Disadvantages: Addiction (Alcohol) (see *Changing Times*, p. 41); Bloodlust; Code of Honor (Xia); Odious Personal Habit (Poor Manners); Overconfidence.

Skills: Broadsword; Fast-Draw (Sword); Meditation; Rapier Art; anything (required or optional) included in Zhua (p. 31).

Perks: Quick-Sheathe; Style Familiarity (Zhua).

MILITARY ZERO-G

7 points

Military Zero-G developed through the middle of the century out of standard military hand-to-hand training as a pragmatic style featuring quick-and-dirty elimination techniques for use in low- or no-gravity situations. Practitioners are expected to close with and attack opponents with great aggression. The style assumes the fighter will be attacked while closing the gap – kick-jamming techniques, arm locks, and leg grappling are taught to counter such moves. The style also includes knife, stick, and boomstick (see pp. 32-33) techniques and counters.

The style given here is the form used in the U.S. Special Operations community – many other military and security forces rely on variations or similar styles. Those units and forces without the time (and/or VR resources) to dedicate to this level of training often use Freefighting (p. 26) instead. In practice, the opportunities to employ this training have proved rare enough that many senior officers question the need to retain it. Even so, some elite units still insist that, when this sort of thing is needed, nothing else will do.

Some combat courses still teach limited sentry removal techniques, but these are largely legacy maneuvers in an age of high-tech surveillance. Only a few forces employ troops with extra arms instead of legs, so the Lower Arm Blindside perk is extremely rare – but it fits well with the style.

No body of cinematic techniques is associated with Military Zero-G. The entire style is centered on getting in tight with your opponent and hammering or choking him into submission – or death. Fancy moves are actively discouraged.

Skills: Free Fall; Karate; Knife; Judo; Shortsword; Vacc Suit.

Techniques: Aggressive Parry; Arm Lock; Attack from Above (Karate or Knife); Choke Hold; Disarming; Head Butt; Head Lock; Jam; Knee Strike; Leg Grapple; Leg Lock; Neck Snap; Retain Weapon; Targeted Attack (Knife or Shortsword Thrust/Neck); Uppercut.

Perks: Lower Arm Blindside (p. 13); Suit Familiarity (Vacc Suit).

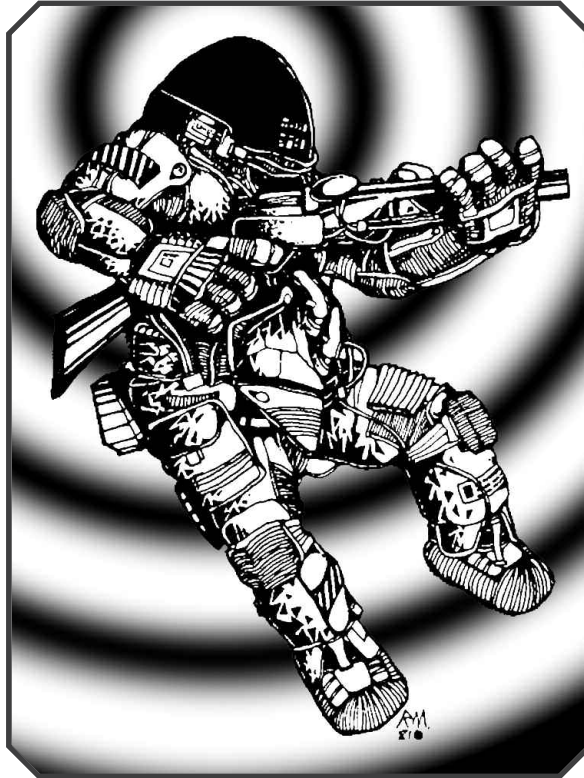
Optional Traits

Advantages: Combat and “spacer” biomods and nanosymbionts; Combat Reflexes; Fit; G-Experience.

Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Duty; Fanaticism (To a service or nation); Sense of Duty (To a service or nation).

Skills: Beam Weapons (Pistol); Climbing; Garrote; Guns (Pistol); Jumping; Smallsword; Stealth.

Techniques: Close-Quarters Battle (any); Retain Weapon (any).



REMOTE SNIPING

8 points

Snipers continue to be a potentially useful type of soldier for armies to deploy in 2100, able to inflict damage and confusion out of all proportion to their numbers and cost. However, they suffer huge problems on the Fifth Wave battlefield, because their targets are all too likely to be equipped with countermeasures – primarily sensors that can trace a shot back to its point of origin, often linked directly to automated “counterbattery” systems. More than one traditional sniper has died within three seconds of squeezing off his first shot at a high-tech force, slain by precise return fire. All troops in 2100 suffer from this problem to some extent, but ordinary infantry can hope to survive by exploiting numbers, mobility, and the confusion of the battlefield; lone snipers don’t have those benefits.

Modern snipers get around this problem by deploying technology of their own, including semi-disposable teleoperated drones and pre-emplaced one-shot ordinance launchers. This style represents the body of methods taught by Fifth Wave sniper schools to make this effective. Note that the school’s doctrine and traditions – not personal taste! – determine which of the weapon skills are required.

Stylists like to prepare positions carefully in advance, setting up intricate kill zones and making sure that no shot can

be traced back to them personally, although the most skilled of them can improvise and deploy fast when they have to. Such snipers are notoriously hard to recall once they’re on a mission; they tend to avoid communications, to minimize their electronic visibility and avoid attempts to smoke them out, and their weapons arrays are often set for autonomous fire. Similar methods are taught by the armies of several antagonistic power blocs and by one or two smart insurgent

forces with the ability to learn and to scavenge or acquire appropriate gear.

Because snipers need to know how to operate a wide range of weapon systems, this is nominally an expensive style in point-cost terms – especially as a sniper is usually still expected to have *exceptional* skill with his personal weapon. However, students for these courses are usually chosen for proven aptitude in prior training with several of the style’s skills, so teachers can concentrate on filling out their skill sets and teaching them to integrate all that they know. Still, several armies are increasingly opting to issue less broadly trained snipers with personal AIs that can handle the additional weapon types they may need.

Cinematic remote snipers are depicted as shadowy ghosts, vanishing from the scene and leaving carnage behind them; even if they are the heroes of the story, they often appear sinister or uncanny.

Skills: Camouflage; Electronics Operation (Communications); Stealth; any *four* of Artillery (Guided Missile), Gunner (Machine Gun or Rockets), or Guns (Grenade Launcher, Gyroc, or Rifle).

Techniques: Targeted Attack (any/Face or Vitals).

Cinematic Skills: Zen Marksmanship.

Perks: Akimbo; Armorer’s Gift (any); Cool Under Fire (p. 13); Cross-Trained (any).

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Per.

Advantages and Perks: Acute Vision; Allies (Supporting combat infomorphs); Deep Sleeper; Outdoorsman; Single-Minded.

Disadvantages: Callous; Duty.

Skills: Armoury (any); Battlesuit; Electronics Operation (EW or Surveillance); Electronics Repair (Surveillance); Explosives (Demolition); Forward Observer; Guns (LAW); Navigation (Land); Observation; Soldier; Survival (any); Tactics; Traps; Urban Survival; any weapon skill not taken from the required options list.

Techniques: Precision Aiming; Set Trap (p. B233).

SACT

6 points

For as long as there have been serious combat divers, the forces that employed them have been training them in as much underwater combat skill as they seemed to need. Mostly, however, this has meant a fairly basic, *ad hoc* collection of moves – handling methods for appropriate weapons, maybe some knife strikes to vulnerable points such as air hoses – never collected into a large or formal enough body of lore to rate as a serious style.

The evolution of TL9-10 subaqua technology, let alone the creation of parahuman and bioroid types who can operate underwater without technological aids, has changed that. Now, countless underwater installations need protection (or rate as valuable military or economic targets). Even more opportunities exist for divers to attack surface targets from beneath the water; warriors have to learn to fight there – and hopefully to fight well. Even with TL10 technology, spotting a well-equipped opponent at range can be tricky underwater, and hand weapon ranges are often seriously reduced. Thus, this sort of training still includes a large element of hand-to-hand combat.

*The U.S. Navy is a leader in
the development of modern diving
and underwater operations.*

*– U.S. Navy
Diving Manual, 1999*

“SACT” was originally short for “Sub-Aqua Combat Training”; the acronym has been around and widespread for long enough to become a word in its own right, pronounced to rhyme with “act.” Although SACT was a specific U.S. Navy training regime, the word has become a nickname in military circles for a range of similar training courses from all over the world, also sometimes referred to as “Sub-Fu” or “Aqua-Fu.” Although many local variations exist, teachers learn from each other, through friendly meetings or espionage, and the different schools are converging on a more or less standard form. Its defining features include the study of various hand weapons that are useful underwater, both archaic (knives, spears) and high-tech (boomsticks, limpet mine dispensers – see pp. 32-33); a strong emphasis on thrusts (preferably with weapons) over swings (which tend to be baffled by water); a related focus on grappling techniques; and a recognition that underwater combat is inherently three-dimensional.

Another notable feature is the elimination of the targeted strikes that were once considered so useful underwater. High-tech military diving gear may well lack vulnerable airlines or detachable tanks, while opponents may actually be subaquatic bioroids or cybershells that don’t need diving equipment at all, and may not have entirely human vulnerabilities. Still, some fighters still learn some old-school killing knife thrusts.

Sact is an aggressive style, emphasizing the effectiveness of a quick first strike, especially when the fighter has a powerful

weapon. It also recognizes the possibility of facing well-armored foes and of being caught without a weapon. In those cases, a fighter is advised to maneuver and possibly grapple while looking for help or a balancing advantage. Military divers have to be quite courageous to volunteer for the duty, but often also display a streak of caution, preparing carefully for their missions and monitoring their situation carefully along the way.

No cinematic form exists of this style; it’s insufficiently well known as yet, and too bluntly practical. InVids with subaquatic specialists as heroes mostly just emphasize their agility, cunning, and high-tech gadgetry.

Skills: Aquabatics; Knife; Shortsword; Swimming*; Wrestling.

Techniques: Choke Hold; Limpet Mine Attachment (DX) (p. 15); Retain Weapon; Scissors Hold; Targeted Attack (Knife Thrust/Neck or Vitals); Targeted Attack (Shortsword Thrust/Vitals); Wrench Arm; Wrench Leg.

Perks: Naval Training; Power Grappling; Suit Familiarity (Diving Suit).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Fearlessness; Natural Diver (*Changing Times*, p. 40); Subaqua biomods and nanosymbionts.

Disadvantages and Quirks: Bloodlust; Careful; Duty; Sense of Duty (To nation or service).

Skills: Brawling; Breath Control; Diving Suit; Guns (Gyroc, Pistol, or SMG); Scuba; Soldier; Spear.

Techniques: Knee Strike; Limpet Mine Attachment (Brawling).

* Swimming skill is *optional* for those with the Amphibious advantage or the Aquatic disadvantage. Reduce the style cost by 1 point for them.

SHAN CHUAN (KILLER FIST KUNG FU)

3 points

It is hard to find the true roots of this style, which includes dozens of schools in 2100. It probably developed out of Muay Thai, Bando, and some “external” kung fu forms, as well as some modernized Pankration schools and simple streetfighting techniques. Dr. John Yueh, an American-Chinese physician, founded the first school during the 2040s and 2050s.

Shan Chuan – sometimes called “Kill Fu” by both fans and detractors alike – concentrates solely on the quick and dirty infliction of a maximum amount of damage to the opponent. Students even study anatomy to learn about the best ways to cripple and kill their foes. Some schools concentrate on the use of body-mass and wrestling techniques (Wrestling becomes a mandatory skill, Sumo Wrestling becomes an option; add Choke Hold, Head Lock and Neck Snap to the techniques, Immovable Stance and Backbreaker and Piledriver to cinematic skills and techniques respectively, and Cotton Stomach, Iron Neck, and Power Grappling to perks; de-emphasize striking-related techniques and perks). Other schools focus on devastating kicks (drop Counterattack and Two-Handed Punch from techniques; add Jump Kick, Kicking, and Spinning Kick, plus Lethal Kick to cinematic techniques). The style has been around long enough to accumulate its own body of legends, which naturally are all based on exaggerations of its fighters’ lethality and power.

While most “legit” practitioners of Kill Fu use their skills only in meatfighting contests, some people have certain real-life applications for this style. Rumor has it that some Maple Syndicate families keep teams of Shan Chuan-trained Spartan bioroids as enforcers and personal bodyguards . . .

Skills: Brawling; Karate.

Techniques: Aggressive Parry; Axe Kick; Counterattack (Karate); Ear Clap; Eye-Gouging; Ground Fighting; Head Butt; Jam; Knee Strike; Targeted Attack (Brawling or Karate Punch/Face); Targeted Attack (Karate Knee Strike/Groin); Spinning Punch; Stamp Kick; Two-Handed Punch.

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow; Power Blow; Pressure Points; Pressure Secrets.

Cinematic Techniques: Lethal Strike; Pressure-Point Strike.

Perks: Biting Mastery; Iron Arms; Iron Legs; Neck Control (Brawling); Rapid Retraction.

Optional Traits

Advantages: Combat biomods; Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold.

Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Bully; Reputation.

Skills: Lifting; Physiology; Running; Stealth; Wrestling.

ZHUA

4 points

This style was originally described in *In the Well* (pp. 92-93). It is a martial art that has evolved in the Chinese community on Mars, with features that enable stylists to exploit the planet's low gravity – primarily the use of spectacular leaping acrobatic moves that would be considered hopelessly cinematic back on Earth. Zhua is an unarmed style, partly as a point of tradition but also because it developed in the Chinese-governed domes where weapons were severely restricted for multiple reasons. However, Zhua training does allow for the range of “street” combat biomods that are available in the Martian martial-arts underworld, with hand strikes that are highly effective when used with claws (see p. 10). Throws, on the other hand, are not emphasized, as falls are much less likely to hurt an opponent in Martian gravity – but some schools do cover that topic and a bit of grappling, or at least teach basic counters for use when grappled.

In combat, Zhua stylists balance on their toes, with one foot far in front of the other; the feet are mostly used for mobility, the hands for attack and defense. Kicks are limited to flashy opening and finishing moves, and the occasional passing strike when jumping clean over opponents. While Zhua fighters can be aggressive when they have the advantage, they begin most fights with several Defensive Attacks, until they have the measure of their foe. Because transhuman opponents can have such a range of body types, Zhua instructors pay little attention to attempts to read a foe or strike at vulnerable points; they prefer direct blows to obvious targets. Wiser instructors also teach that, if the opponent proves too tough for that to work, a Zhua fighter should use agility and speed to get away.

Different Zhua courses teach striking methods that are closer to Boxing or Karate, for slightly different purposes. Karate is certainly better for *most* purposes, and includes kicking, which stylists do use occasionally. Boxing is easier to learn (making it good for basic self-defense students) and doesn't take encumbrance

Rival “Martian” Styles

Uninformed observers occasionally confuse Hishōjutsu (p. 26) with Zhua (below). However, they are very different, and some rivalry exists between the two.

Zhua is very much “Rust China Kung Fu”; it has evolved in the specific Martian environment. While it has a fair number of non-ethnic-Chinese practitioners, it is still linked to Chinese culture. It also focuses on barehanded combat, making it useful in strictly controlled Chinese domes where *any* weapon may be spotted and confiscated.

Hishōjutsu, by contrast, is adapted for a wide range of gravitational conditions, from Martian 0.38 G to free fall (which is the usual excuse given for all its flashy, flamboyant kicks), and incorporates plenty of weapon use. When confrontations occur between practitioners of the two styles, which one wins often depends heavily on the specific circumstances.

In addition, Zhua has some associations with the Martian underworld and the Triads – although it also has plenty of perfectly respectable students. Meanwhile, Hishōjutsu has some long-standing if vague associations with more politically idealistic radical movements on Mars and in the outer system. These two stereotypes create a degree of friction, while making some of the ruling power structures suspicious of both.

penalties (making it useful for fighters in heavy vacc suits or outdoor gear – although encumbrance is rarely a major problem in Martian gravity). With cumbersome outdoor gear less required as Martian terraforming progresses, Boxing moves are falling out of fashion in Zhua schools, although they're likely to survive as options for teaching to casual students.

Skills: Acrobatics; Boxing or Karate; Jumping.

Techniques: Breakfall; Elbow Strike (Karate); Evade; Feint; Head Butt (Karate); Jump Kick (Karate); Spinning Punch (Karate).

Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow; Flying Leap; Power Blow.

Cinematic Techniques: Flying Jump Kick (Karate); Springing Attack.

Perks: Acrobatic Feints; Acrobatic Kicks; Armor Familiarity (Karate); Combat Jumping* (p. 12); Iron Hands; Rapid Retraction (Punches); Suit Familiarity (NBC Suit or Vacc Suit); Technique Mastery (Evade); Unusual Training (Breaking Blow, Only vs. well-braced objects out of combat).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Andraste and combat biomods; Combat Reflexes; Cultural Familiarity (Asian/Chinese); Extra Attack (Single Skill, Boxing or Karate); Language (Cantonese or Mandarin); Resistant to Chi Abilities (in very cinematic campaigns).

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Xia); Enemies (Rust China cops, Rival schools, Racketeers, Rival Triads, etc.); Intolerance (Earth “authorities” of any sort); Overconfidence.

Skills: Whichever of Boxing or Karate wasn't taken as required; Breath Control; Judo; Karate Sport; Savoir-Faire (Dojo).

* This is the signature move of Zhua, so it can be purchased as soon as the student has Style Familiarity – 10 points in the style's skills are not necessary. The requirement for both Acrobatics and Jumping at DX or better still applies, however.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

It was an astonishingly secure golf course, as golf courses go, but the security had two flaws. First, it assumed that any intruders would themselves be relying on technology – so a spy with very little metal on his actual person, giving off no radio emissions, could move through most of the place like a ghost, once he was past the perimeter. Second, the water feature on the seventh had to get its water from somewhere, and that somewhere proved to be linked by a broad pipe with only the most pathetic of mesh protections.

So the spy got onto the course with his golf bag, leaving his air mask at the outlet of the pipe. Once his golf clothes had buzzed themselves clean and dry, he slipped into the clubhouse and planted his little nanovirus payloads in the kitchens just before lunch was served. Then he made his way back toward the water feature.

*The meeting with the guard was sheer bad luck, of course, but the fellow was a bungler. When the spy's first attack – a solid kick to the body – bounced off his nanoweave suit, the fool actually **smiled** and cracked his knuckles! That gave the spy plenty of*

*time to draw what he needed from the golf bag – and the guard just looked **puzzled** at that!*

The rather elegant fencing thrust felt like a terrible waste, under the circumstances, but it did the job. The boomstick payload detonated with a soft report, and the guard dropped on the spot.

His personal systems would have alerted the control center, of course, but that still gave the spy time to reach the water and dive in. If the guard was lucky, his bosses might even be able and willing to salvage whatever it was he used for a brain. The spy doubted that he'd learn anything from the experience, though.

Much of the equipment of the more traditional martial arts remains the same in 2100 as for centuries before, although materials and standards of manufacture of budget items may be markedly improved. Even so, technology allows some refinements and new ideas. Some of the following items are drawn from the Fourth Edition version of **GURPS Ultra-Tech**, while others are new.

WEAPONS

The following are a few high-tech melee weapons that can be used in conjunction with more or less traditional martial-arts methods to useful effect. While TL9-10 offensive technology primarily involves a considerable increase in the accuracy and effectiveness of ranged weapons, some of the technology can be applied to melee fighting.

No guns are presented here. The styles in this book that are designed for use with ranged weapons can be applied perfectly well to those listed in the main **Transhuman Space** book and in **Changing Times** – or use **Ultra-Tech**, for a slightly different treatment of TL9-10 weaponry.

Boomsticks

The basic concept of the boomstick goes back to the 20th century, when similar weapons were used by divers, mostly to drive off sharks and other large predators. With not only increased subaquatic operations but also the possibility of serious military combat operations aboard spacecraft and stations, weapons designers dusted off and embellished the idea.

A boomstick consists of a short rod or baton with a small impact-detonated explosive charge at the tip. In its simplest form, it is quite easy to make, given a skilled armorer, an adequate workshop, a supply of small arms ammunition, and some basic materials. The *spacer boomstick* represents such a version, often carried by civilian spacers in the Belt who expect trouble, citizens of some larger underwater communities, and some terrorists. The “warhead” on this is actually an adapted shotgun cartridge; if the user somehow triggers it without touching a target, the buckshot spreads normally. Other types of shotgun shell might also be used to create variant damage effects. Spacer boomsticks are purely one-use weapons; the detonation trashes much of the structure of the stick. LC3.

More advanced designs are also available. The *panzerstick* is a professionally made boomstick, which not only has a better designed and fabricated warhead, but is better balanced (allowing slightly fancier combat use). It may be a bit more reliable and certainly has proper safety features. However, the shaped-charge warhead (basically a repurposed 15mm HEMP round) also produces a 1d crushing explosion that can effect the wielder as well as the target (and anyone else nearby).

Thus, the panzerstick usually is limited to troops in fully enclosed armor (typically battlesuits, or at least armored space or diving suits). It can be reused by fitting a new warhead (cost \$3), which takes about a minute. Some panzersticks actually have a limpet mine-like attachment capability (see *Limpet Mines*, below); the warhead sticks to the target and detaches from the stick, detonating a fixed time later. The time is set by a dial in the base of the stick (allowing any time delay from 0 to 11 seconds). This raises the cost of the weapon to \$100, and the cost of a new warhead to \$5. Panzersticks are popular with spaceborne troops of the French Foreign Legion, among others. LC1.

Lastly, the *burnstick* is a variant boomstick whose head, rather than carrying an explosive charge, is loaded with a dose of nanoburn (see *Transhuman Space*, p. 158, or *Ultra-Tech*, p. 161) in a sticky gel suspension so that it only effects the single target. Other nanoweapons might replace the nanoburn for specialized purposes. The cost of a reload is \$10. LC1.

In action, the user arms the boomstick (a Ready action), then stabs with the tip; the warhead is triggered on a successful hit. Because the effect has to be somewhat directional, a spacer boomstick or standard panzerstick won't work properly if swung; treat it as an ordinary baton in that case, with a chance for the warhead to be damaged at the GM's whim. However, a "limpet panzerstick" or burnstick *can* be designed for effective swinging use, and some are (doing swing crushing damage followed by the warhead effect). If a successful attack is blocked, or if a missed or dodged attack was aimed at someone immediately in front of a solid surface, the boomstick may trigger and affect whatever got in its way – GM's option.

Limpet Mines

In general, the best way to attack a heavily armored high-tech opponent is to shoot him with a big gun. Nonetheless, actually placing a "warhead" by hand occasionally makes sense, perhaps because close combat is somehow unavoidable, or because the attacker doesn't want to fire projectile weapons in a cluttered or confused environment. Action InVid directors love this idea.

Limpet mines are hand-held "warheads" that suit this purpose; they can also serve as handy instant booby-traps or small demolition charges. They can be activated (or deactivated) by a coded communicator pulse (usually sent from the user's wearable or implant computer). After activation, they will stick to any surface onto which they are slapped, using a molecular adhesive pad. They then detonate after a preset interval (up to two weeks in theory, but usually set to a few seconds when the activation pulse is sent, and very rarely more than 100 seconds) or immediately on another signal from the user. Roll vs. DX, Brawling, or the Limpet Mine Attachment technique (p. 15) to secure one in combat.

To remove a limpet mine on which you can get a grip but without the proper code, roll vs. ST-5, one try per second; pulling one off flesh or other soft materials does 1 point of damage. On detonation, a limpet mine does 5d×4(10) crushing incendiary damage to the target, and a linked 2d crushing explosive damage with 1d+1 cutting fragmentation damage to *anyone* nearby. Hence, realistically, this weapon works best for

fully armored users; anyone except battlesuit or cybershell troops probably needs to set a significant delay and put some distance or cover between himself and the mine before it goes off. Each weighs 0.06 lbs. and costs \$5. LC1.

In terms of *Ultra-Tech* (p. 147), this is a limpet mine version of a 25mm thimble grenade with a TL10 shaped charge warhead. That supplement also includes a wide range of other warhead sizes and options.

Limpet Mine Dispenser

This tube-like device, usually worn on an arm, incorporates a magazine holding 10 limpet mines (above). As with single hand-held limpet mines, roll vs. Brawling, DX, or the Limpet Mine Attachment technique (p. 15) to attach one correctly. These devices are usually mounted as external accessories on battlesuits or cybershells, but can be fitted to a nonpowered rigid sleeve; the wearer does need a minimum amount of bracing.

Martial Arts and *GURPS Ultra-Tech*

As noted elsewhere, some *Transhuman Space* campaigns may use the current edition of *GURPS Ultra-Tech* as a further or alternative source of equipment options. In addition to a wide range of guns, this offers possibilities for alternative types of limpet mines, grenades, or boomstick warheads, as well as several melee weapons (on pp. 162-166 of *Ultra-Tech*) that could fit well in this setting. Some are repeated in the main text here. Other items of note include karatands (very appropriate), vibroblades (not inconceivable, though arguably verging on superscience), and rocket strikers (probably possible with *Transhuman Space* technology, but a little bit silly).

Chapter 7 of that supplement features a system for customizing armor for varying levels of bulk and stylishness and to cover specific areas of the body. This can be used to define various types of martial-arts sports/training gear, and to specify custom-designed protection for the sort of combat specialists who like to be able to operate in civilian environments without attracting too much attention.

Stun Wands

A stun wand is, very simply, the technology of the shock glove (see *Changing Times*, p. 63) fitted to a stick comparable to a baton or short staff, giving it a bit more reach and the option to parry opponents with something less vulnerable than an open hand. Weapons of this type are often carried by police officers, especially on riot control duty. Some wands are jointed or padded, to reduce the risk of physical injury even by a blow from an adrenaline-charged riot policeman; -2 to crushing damage in this case. All are LC4.

As with the shock glove, the victim must resist stun affliction damage when struck by a stun wand, and the base roll to resist is HT-2.

These values are consistent with the treatment of electrical stun weapons in *Changing Times* and earlier *Transhuman Space* books. If you are using *Ultra-Tech* for all purposes, use the damage effects listed there (p. 165). Note also that the version of this weapon described in *Ultra-Tech* can't be used effectively with Smallsword skill. However, combat experts in the *Transhuman Space* world have recognized the possibility of using this weapon with refined styles, and ensured that standard models are correctly balanced for the purpose.

Superfine Blades

The best available TL9-10 materials are superior to steel for melee weapons. *Superfine* blades, made of advanced alloys or ceramics, can be used for any weapon that does cutting or impaling damage. They add +2 to cutting and impaling damage, give a (2) armor divisor, and are six times normal cost.

Many human special ops troops carry such blades, usually large knives, as a last-ditch option or as a point of style. The right choice of materials and coating also ensures that their blades are nonmagnetic, corrosion-resistant, and nonreflective.

Melee Weapons Table

TL	Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
----	--------	--------	-------	-------	------	--------	----	-------

BRAWLING or DX

9	Limpet Mine Dispenser	See text	C, 1	No	\$200	2/0.6	–	See text
---	-----------------------	----------	------	----	-------	-------	---	----------

SHORTSWORD (DX-5, Broadsword-2, Force Sword-4, Jitte/Sai-3, Knife-4, Saber-4, Smallsword-4, or Tonfa-3)

9	Electric Stun Wand <i>linked</i> or <i>linked</i>	sw cr HT-2 aff thr cr HT-2 aff	1 1	0 0	\$100 –	1 –	5 5	See text
9	Panzerstick	5d×2(5) imp inc	1	0	\$60	1.2	6	See text
9	Spacer Boomstick	4d+4(0.25) pi++	1	0	\$35	1.2	7	See text
10	Burnstick	See text	1	0	\$50	1	6	See text

SMALLSWORD (DX-5, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Saber-3, or Shortsword-4)

9	Electric Stun Wand <i>linked</i> or <i>linked</i>	sw cr HT-2 aff thr cr HT-2 aff	1 1	0F 0F	\$100 –	1 –	5 5	See text
9	Panzerstick	5d×2(5) imp inc	1	0F	\$60	1.2	6	See text
10	Burnstick	See text	1	0F	\$50	1	6	See text

ARMOR AND TRAINING GEAR

Any of the training gear or training/sports armor detailed in *Martial Arts* (pp. 232-234) can still be acquired in the *Transhuman Space* setting. However, general-purpose TL10 armor may actually be cheaper, lighter, and usually superior for many purposes – especially where safeguarding opponents' hands or feet against injury isn't a major concern. Any special training armor that is available is often lighter and more flexible than lower-tech versions, thanks to advanced materials; *halve* any penalties to DX or Move from such gear, rounding down.

In addition, TL10 training/sports gear is often studded with micro-sensors that detect and measure all impacts on the surface and can send the information via microcommunicator to a nearby computer system. (This adds 10% to prices at this TL.) This is used both in sports contests, to provide a reliable scoring system, and in serious combat training, to assess how well students are learning to deliver their attacks. Some designs have simple "chameleon" surfaces (adding 20% to prices), and automatically change color or appearance near an impact point, displaying "rips," "bruises," or "blood spatters." This is mostly for

show, especially in public contests, but some teachers also feel that it adds a useful touch of verisimilitude in training.

When choosing gear for actual combat, like anyone else, a martial artist might employ any of the body armor options defined in the *Transhuman Space* main book, or those in *Ultra-Tech* if the GM prefers to use that. Note that the very light weight of effective TL10 personal armor means that quite good protection can be fully compatible with the most mobility-oriented fighting styles, even without special training.

Riot Shields

During the 20th century, police, especially those on riot duty, rediscovered the classic shield – albeit using new, high-tech materials. The idea still works in the face of riots at the end of the 21st, and the materials have got even better; TL10 shields are made of advanced polymers, sometimes reinforced with nanofibers. In addition, standard police shields have "semi-smart" surfaces (which detect impacts) and incorporate one or more miniaturized cameras and short-range radio transmitters.

These allow nearby police systems to detect and log incidents, including missiles hitting the shield and occasions when the wielder uses it as an offensive weapon. This helps senior officers track the progress of incidents and provides reliable evidence for any ensuing court cases.

Medium Police Shield: This is a simple medium-size shield, usually with “Police” or an organization logo on the face. This type is occasionally made with a single central hand-grip instead of the usual arm strap, in accordance with more aggressive and flexible training doctrines; in that case, use Shield (Buckler) skill instead of Shield.

Large Riot Shield: This is a large-size shield, usually issued either to less well-trained officers (who use it simply for the Defense Bonus) or to specialist squads (whose members have the Shield-Wall Training perk, and who can therefore use it actively and very effectively in group actions). It has large transparent sections, which don’t weaken it – materials are

available that were originally developed for armored visors or aerospace windshields – and a panel with a controllable liquid crystal surface that can display organization symbols or simple messages such as “Return to Your Homes” or “Protest Declared Unlawful.” Similar designs are occasionally used by SWAT teams who can’t afford armored cybershells to take point during assaults, or who need to have human members deployed in forward positions for political or ethical reasons.

Shield Table

TL Shield DB Cost Weight DR/HP LC

SHIELD (DX-4, or other Shield at -2)

10	Medium Police Shield	2	\$70	7	28/40	4
10	Large Riot Shield	3	\$300	12	35/60	4

Victory in combat consists of defeating the enemy – no more, no less. Defensive actions simply ensure that one survives long enough to do so, while remaining capable of the requisite movements. When survival and capability can be ensured by other means, we can concentrate on what is actually important.

– Dr. John Yueh, 2052

SOFTWARE

The following programs are widely used by martial artists and other combat specialists.

Brawl-Aide

Technically a type of skill set software, defined and priced accordingly, Brawl-Aide requires skill set slots to use. The software provides Tactics with an optional specialty in defensive hand-to-hand fighting, and thus is IQ/Average. As combat is inherently a high-stress situation, Tactics will usually be at -3 due to Limited Integration – but most of this software’s practical applications are simple enough that the task difficulty bonuses (p. B345) will more than compensate. It’s also possible, though rare, for AIs to learn the skill for themselves, thus avoiding the penalty.

The software is largely useless for experienced combatants, as the advice it can usefully provide is exactly the sort of thing they already know, but for an amateur with just a little self-defense training, it can be literally a life-saver. The user should train with it for at least 15-25 hours, ideally while learning self-defense skills, otherwise while sparring in the gym or in a good VR simulation. The software and its associated AI learn what the user is capable of, and can suggest how to handle dangers. Rather than saying too much beyond simple drills

(“Punch-Turn-Stamp!”), it often overlays brightly colored “target markers” wherever it judges the user should strike, or deploys them to indicate high-priority threats; students learn to aim at these during the familiarization process. The AI can make Per-based skill rolls to spot weapons or body armor, even if they are somewhat concealed, and will factor this information into its advice.

For a few users, this sort of software, or just an AI trained to provide well-judged advice in combat, can act as a Mitigator limitation on the Combat Paralysis disadvantage; the value is -60% if it runs on a wearable system, -80% if the user employs an implant computer. Note that the AI must spend most of its time talking to the user during fights for this to work. *Cost and Complexity as for standard skill set. LC4.*

RefSoft

This skill set software offers some specialty of Games relating to a combat sport (that is, an IQ/Easy skill). The main use is of course to enable an AI to act as a contest judge. All RefSoft programs include interfaces for any sensors normally used to aid judging in the sport in question, such as impact detectors fitted to body armor. *Cost and Complexity as for standard skill set. LC4.*

Style Analysis

This software can function as a Style Scanner program (see below) when presented with a known and established style; treat it as having built-in skill equal to twice its Complexity (that is, from 10 for Complexity 5 up to 16 for Complexity 8). However, it *doesn't* operate as a skill set. It can also attempt to reconstruct and assess a style that *isn't* already in its database by analyzing the performance of one or more fighters from first principles. The output from this process is a comprehensive "description" in digital form that can be added to the database used by another compatible Style Analysis or Style Scanner program, displayed in illustrated form in a VR environment for a human trainer to review further, or used as input for a Style Trainer program (p. 37).

This class of software can range from Complexity 5 to 8; versions that are more complex are simply better at their job. The software's basic roll to conduct this sort of analysis is equal to $(\text{Complexity} \times 2) - 3$; that is, from 7 for Complexity 5 up to 13 for Complexity 8. Several important modifiers should be taken into account for this roll.

Modifiers: Duration of the recording or combat directly observed: +0 for one full hour, -1 for every 10 minutes less than this down to -5 for 10 minutes (the functional minimum); +1 for two hours, +2 for three hours, +3 for four hours or more. +3 to recognize and analyze a minor unknown variant of a known style from its database (e.g., to realize that the subject is using a version of Jujutsu that includes some weapons training, or a common style with the Self-Defense lens applied). +1 for recordings that include at least 25% but no more than 50% material taken from the viewpoint of a fighter or opponent (by wearable camera, etc.). -1 if the style (as seen) has five or more mandatory skills. +1 if the style (as seen) has no more than two mandatory skills. -1 to -5 or worse for poor-quality recordings (from a distance, ancient black-and-white film, images shot secretly by a concealed camera, etc.), depending on the GM's assessment of quality.

Recreating Lost Styles

Quite a few martial-arts experts are *extremely* dubious about the use of Style Analysis software to recreate lost styles, arguing that it does little but stitch together a few details with a lot of the designer's prior assumptions. They say it's like trying to reconstruct a whole dinosaur from a couple of bones; it may work, but it's not the real thing.

When running analysis on an unknown style, note the margin of success and whether it was a critical success; this is important if the results are fed to a Style Trainer program. If the subject was actually using multiple styles, the software may come up with an "omnibus" style that includes features of both, or stop and display a warning message suggesting that the input data includes anomalies (GM's option). The GM can also rule that some input data misses significant elements of the subject style – for example, recordings of sporting contests may lack examples of a style's more dangerous, "serious combat" moves, or a particular fighter might have avoided using

one or two techniques out of personal preference. Input recordings will *often* be missing the style's non-DX-based skills and some or all of its optional skills. Where such gaps exist, those elements of the style will be missing from the output data. Conversely, if the input showed heavy use of the style's optional skills, then the software may well treat those as if they were required.

Normally, a failed roll means that the software can't use this body of input data to produce useful outputs, although a critical failure may generate bizarrely useless results. In games with cinematic martial arts, the software will likely have severe difficulties when presented with cinematic versions of styles (unless it's a special, advanced – and itself cinematic – piece of programming), and will probably just throw up error messages if confronted with recordings of cinematic skills or techniques. \$400 for Complexity 5, \$900 for Complexity 6, \$2,000 for Complexity 7, or \$4,000 for Complexity 8. LC4.

Style Scanner

This is skill set software for Expert Skill (Style Identification), an IQ/Hard skill which can substitute for any combat skill, Teaching, Tactics, some Games specialties, etc., solely for the purpose of recognizing martial-arts styles in action. It is designed to scan visual records of combats (from cameras in real time or from video recordings), analyze the physical motions and body language of the combatants, and compare them with extensive databases of known martial-arts styles. With this information, it displays a style match for the user, along with an assessment of the certainty of the identification. If possible, it offers some standard advice on how to counter this particular style. These notes are rarely detailed or sophisticated enough to make a real difference in subsequent combats, but can help eliminate unfamiliarity penalties, at the GM's option.

The skill roll to identify a style takes modifiers, as follows.

Modifiers: Duration of the recording or combat directly observed: -10 for 10 seconds (the functional minimum), -5 for 20 seconds, -2 for 30 seconds, -1 for one minute, +0 for two minutes, +1 for five minutes, +2 for 10 minutes, +3 for 20 minutes or more – this assumes that all combatants observed are using the same style, or at least that both are students of the style; if only one is using the style to be identified, *halve* the observation time to determine the effective time. -1 to -5 for poor-quality recordings (from a distance, ancient black-and-white film, images shot secretly by a concealed camera, etc.). +2 for a very widespread style (Boxing, Judo, Wushu, etc.). -3 per style after the first if the combatant is actually using *multiple* styles.

One minor but useful feature of Style Scanner software is that it can take advantage of an AI's Enhanced Time Sense when analyzing video recordings. Treat it as watching these at four times normal speed.

A failed roll usually just causes the software to display "No Reliable Match." If low-quality input data leads to a roll failed by 1 to 3, the GM may decide that the software offers a tentative identification, perhaps suggesting several possible similar styles. Critical failures can lead to dramatically incorrect identifications. *Cost and Complexity as for standard skill set. LC4.*

Style Trainer

This software is more than a Teaching skill set, although it functions similarly. Actually a general-purpose, VR-oriented training system, it can provide instruction in any martial-arts style for which adequate data exists. Complexity ranges from 5 to 7.

Input data may come from a Style Analysis program (see p. 36), or be prepared “by hand” by a team of experts. The latter option is better but much more expensive. (The experts can and often do start with computer-generated output, though.) Like an ordinary skill set, an AI must operate a Style Trainer program. In turn, this AI must be capable of interfacing with a skill set of the same Complexity (that is, Complexity 5 is equivalent to an 8-point skill set, 6 to 16 points, or 7 to 32 points). Treat the program as giving the AI Teaching-12 for purposes of instruction in this style only, along with every required skill in the style and every DX-based optional skill, all at attribute level for a Complexity 5 Style Trainer, attribute+1 for Complexity 6, or attribute+2 for Complexity 7. These effective skill levels assume “hand-prepared” input data. If using the raw output from a Style Analysis program, all skills take a penalty unless the analysis roll was a critical success; the penalty is -1 if the roll was made by 5 or more, -2 if it was made by 1 to 4, or -3 if it was made exactly. If the AI already knows any of the skills at a

higher level, use that level rather than the one granted by the software for training purposes.

A Style Trainer program can be used for either standard education or intensive training (p. B293), if it meets the requirements for a teacher (work out how many points the operating AI would require to have the skills involved at its effective level if necessary for intensive training purposes). It can train students in the style’s techniques, but only up to its own effective level. If it doesn’t have high enough effective skill to function as a teacher, it may still assist someone in self-teaching – treat it as providing the equivalent of a set of textbooks for this purpose.

The AI only really gains these skills for the purposes of *teaching* that one style. In theory, it can attempt to use skills derived from the database in combat (while running a humanoid cybershell, say, or in a VR environment). When doing so, the -3 (from Limited Integration) for using a skill set in high-stress situations is *doubled* to -6 – the system just isn’t designed to work that way! However, it can use the software to train *itself* in the style; treat this as standard education, *not* self-teaching. As AIs don’t have to sleep, they can acquire styles very fast this way! \$500 for Complexity 5, \$1,000 for Complexity 6, or \$2,000 for Complexity 7. Input data for any style typically costs \$500 plus \$200 per point of the base cost of the style if it’s hand-prepared, or \$200 plus \$50 per point if it’s just unedited output from a Style Analysis program. LC4.

STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

**e23 sells high-quality game adventures
and supplements in PDF format.**

- Get complete sample adventures free for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- PDFs from the major players in online publishing: Ronin Arts, Ken Hite, Atlas Games, and 01 Games.
- New gems from up-and-coming publishers, like Atomic Sock Monkey Press and Expeditious Retreat Press.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and *In Nomine*, with new *GURPS* supplements from Sean Punch, William Stoddard, David Pulver, and Phil Masters!
- Buy it once, have it always. Download your purchases again whenever you need to.



Download ● Print ● Play
STEVE JACKSON GAMES

e23 is part of Warehouse 23, the online store at Steve Jackson Games. Warehouse 23 is also the official Internet retailer for Dork Storm Press, Atlas Games, and many other publishers. Visit us today at www.warehouse23.com for all your game STUFF!

INDEX

- Advantages, 10-11; *perks*, 11-13.
 AI tutors, 21.
 Althasian Iffjurr-Laur style, 27.
 ARC-P style, 9, 22.
 Arm or Wrist Lock technique,
 against nonhumans, 15.
 Armor, 34-35.
 Armorer's Gift perk, 12.
 Army of One perk, 12.
 Artillery skill, 14.
 Backbreaker technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Ballantine, Martin, 9, 22.
 Bantu Boxing (Bantujutsu)
 style, 9, 22-23.
 Battledress Training style, 23.
 Berserk disadvantage, 13.
 Bestial disadvantage, 13.
 Bioroid opponents, 15; *see also*
 Nonhuman Physiology.
 Bloodlust disadvantage, 13.
 Bodyguard lens, 20.
 Boomsticks, 32-34.
 Brawl-Aide software, 35.
 Breaking Blow skill,
 nonhumans and, 17.
 Bully disadvantage, 13.
 Burnsticks, 33, 43.
 Callous disadvantage, 13.
 Campaigns, cinematic elements,
 12.
 Choke Hold technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Claws advantage, 10.
 Cockerdelmi style, 24.
 Code of Honor disadvantage,
 13.
 Combat Jumping perk, 12.
 Combat Paralysis disadvantage,
 13.
 Combat sports, history, 5, 7-8.
 Combate Cercano de los
 Militares, 24.
 Comms Multitasking technique,
 15.
 Cookie Cutter perk, 12-13.
 Cool Under Fire perk, 13.
 Copyrighted styles, 19-20.
 Countermech Training style,
 24-26.
 Cybershell opponents, 15; *hit*
 locations, 16-17; *see also*
 Nonhuman Physiology.
 Dancing Crane Studios, 9, 26.
 Defensive maneuvers, 3D
 environments, 14.
 Disadvantages, 13-14.
 Ear Clap technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Enhanced Defenses advantage,
 11.
 Enhanced Time Sense
 advantage, 11.
 Equipment, 32-37; *from GURPS*
 Ultra-Tech, 33.
 Expert Skill, 14.
 Eye-Gouging technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Famous masters, 9.
 Fast-Draw skill, 14.
 Fictional arts, derived, 8, 27.
 Finger Lock technique, against
 nonhumans, 15.
 Fitness arts, *history*, 4, 7; *styles*,
 25.
 Flight Art style, 9, 26, 31.
 Free Fall lens, 20.
 Free-Fall Roll perk, 12.
 Freefighting style, 26.
 Full-contact sports, *history*, 5,
 7-8.
 Furusiyya-Prime style, 27.
 Games skill, 14.
 Genetic Regulatory Agency
 (GRA), 19.
 Group Performance skill, 15.
 Gunslinger advantage, 11.
GURPS, 12, 17, 19; **Basic Set**,
 3, 16; **Gun Fu**, 3, 11, 27;
 High-Tech, 3, 11, 12;
 Martial Arts, 3, 5-17, 19-21,
 26, 28, 34; **Powers**, 25;
 Psionic Powers, 25;
 Tactical Shooting, 3, 9;
 Ultra-Tech, 32-34; *see also*
 Transhuman Space.
 Ham-Fisted disadvantage, 14.
 Head Lock technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 High Pain Threshold advantage,
 11, 13.
 Hishōjutsu style, 9, 26, 31.
 History, *early 21st century*, 4-5;
 famous masters, 9; *late 21st*
 century, 5-7; *recent events*,
 7-9.
 Hit locations, problems, 16-17.
 Hypnotic Hands skill,
 nonhumans and, 17.
 Il Ballo di Salute style, 25.
 Invisibility Art skill, nonhumans
 and, 17.
 Judo Throw technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Kiai skill, nonhumans and, 17.
 Killer Fist Kung Fu style, 30-31.
 League Combat style, 27.
 Legal concerns, 19-20.
 Lenses, new, 20-21.
 Limpet Mine Attachment
 technique, 15.
 Limpet mines, 33; *dispensers*, 33.
 Lower Arm Blindside perk, 13.
 Makombo, Charles "Croc," 22.
 Margaretian Karate style, 9, 26-
 28.
 Mars, *importance*, 9; *rival styles*,
 31; *styles developed on*, 26,
 28, 31.
 Martian Swordplay style, 28.
 Masters, famous, 9.
 Military lens, 9.
 Military training regimes,
 desensitization, 13; *history*, 5-
 6, 8-9; *styles*, 22-26, 28-30.
 Military Zero-G style, 28.
 Modular Abilities advantage, 11.
 Neck Snap technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Nonhuman physiology, 15-17;
 cinematic skills and, 17;
 defensive features, 17; *hit*
 locations and, 16-17;
 technique problems, 15-16.
 Off-Earth style choices, 20.
 Pacifism (Reluctant Killer),
 disadvantage, 13.
 Panzersticks, 32-34.
 Perks, 11-13.
 Police, lens, 8; *see also* *Military*
 Training Regimes.
 Post-Combat Shakes
 disadvantage, 13.
 Pressure Points skill,
 nonhumans and, 17.
 Pressure Secrets skill,
 nonhumans and, 17.
 Prototyping, *history*, 6; *software*,
 35-36.
 Proudhomme, Anthony, 9, 22.
 Pyramid magazine, 3.
 RefSoft software, 35.
 Remote Sniping style, 29.
 Retreating, 3D environments,
 14.
 Riot shields, 34-35.
 Robotics Expert Skill, 14.
 Sacrifice Throw technique,
 against nonhumans, 16.
 Sact style, 30.
 Sambo style, 19.
 Sayama, Paul, 9, 26.
 Self-defense styles, *history*, 5, 7.
 Sense of Duty disadvantage, 13.
 Sensitivity skill, nonhumans
 and, 17.
 Shan Chuan style, 30.
 Shields, 34-35.
 Show styles, *history*, 7.
 Skills, 14-15; *cinematic in*
 setting, 12; *cinematic and*
 nonhumans, 17.
 Sniping style, 29.
 Software, 35-36; *history*, 6.
 Stress Atavism disadvantage,
 13.
 Striker advantage, 11.
 Stun wands, 33.
 Style Analysis software, 36.
 Style Familiarity perk, 11-12.
 Style Perks, 12-13.
 Style Scanner software, 36.
 Style Trainer software, 37.
 Styles, *cinematic*, 12; *current*
 choices, 18-20; *derived*, 8,
 27; *legal concerns*, 19-20;
 new, 22-31; *recreating lost*, 9,
 36.
 Superfine blades, 34.
 Sweep technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Swordplay style, Martian, 28.
 Table, *melee weapon*, 34; *shield*,
 35.
 Targeted Attacks technique,
 problems, 16-17.
 Teachers, finding, 21.
 Techniques, 15; *against*
 nonhumans, 15-16.
 Trademarked styles, 19-20.
 Trained by a Master advantage,
 11, 21.
 Trained in VR lens, 21.
 Training, *finding a teacher*, 21;
 gear, 34-35.
Transhuman Space, 3, 6, 11-13,
 15, 16, 18, 21, 26, 32, 33, 34;
 Changing Times, 3, 10, 28,
 30, 32-34; **Deep Beyond**, 13;
 High Frontier, 9, 26, 27; **In**
 the Well, 9, 28, 31; **Toxic**
 Memes, 27; **Transhuman**
 Mysteries, 7, 22; *see also*
 GURPS.
 Trip technique, against
 nonhumans, 16.
 Ultimate style, search for, 6.
 Underwater style, 30.
 Unusual Training perk, 12.
 Uplifted-animal opponents, 15;
 see also *Nonhuman*
 Physiology.
 Vigil, Sylvia, 9.
 Virtual reality (VR), *combat*
 sports and, 8; *desensitization*,
 13; *prototyping and*, 6, 36;
 training, 21; *see also*
 Software.
 Weapon Master advantage, 11.
 Weapons, 32-34.
 Wrench Spine technique,
 against nonhumans, 16.
 Yueh, John, 30.
 Zero-G styles, 26, 28-29.
 Zhang, Master Xiao-Yue, 9.
 Zhua style, 9, 31.