



LPJ9961



DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

# TEMPLATE: COMBAT ENDOSKELETON

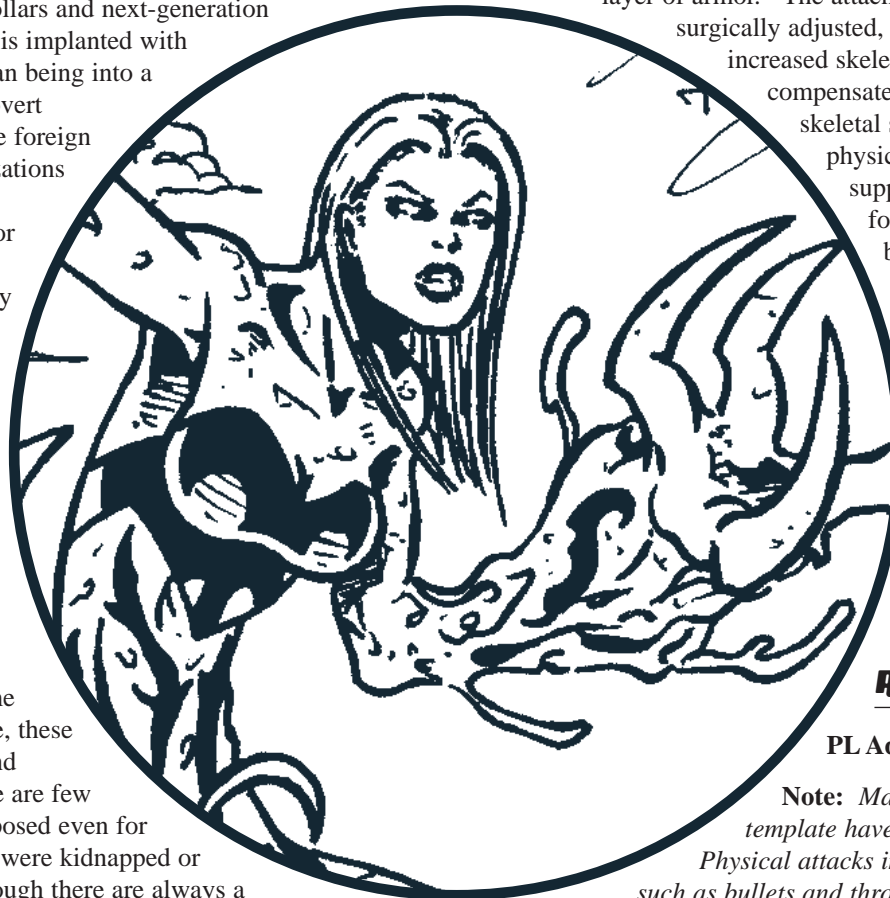
A combat endoskeleton is a framework of high-tech metal alloys reinforcing a human skeletal system. It must be implanted through surgical means or bonded to the bones by forcing compounds of liquefied metal through the recipient's skin and muscle tissue. Either technique involves extreme pain and risk for the subject. The technical and financial means required for such operations is staggering, involving multi-millions of dollars and next-generation medical science. A combat endoskeleton is implanted with one purpose in mind: to transform a human being into a nearly invulnerable fighting machine. Covert factions of the federal government, hostile foreign powers, and far-reaching criminal organizations are the agencies most likely to make such attempts, hoping to create super-soldiers or impervious assassins. Such groups rarely relinquish any successful test subjects they produce, at least not without considerable struggle.

## BECOMING A COMBAT ENDOSKELETON RECIPIENT

Nearly all characters endowed with endoskeletons received them through some super-scientific procedure; as noted above, these procedures are extraordinarily invasive and dangerous in nature. Consequently, there are few willing participants, due to terrible risks posed even for the hardest of subjects. Most recipients were kidnapped or otherwise coerced into participating, although there are always a few foolish or fanatical enough to participate freely. Super beings are preferred as subjects, as they stand a greater chance of survival, especially those with superhuman stamina or recuperative powers. Such beings are already formidable, and once so enhanced they make nearly unstoppable agents for the organizations behind their transformations. Of course, such agents can be very

difficult to control...

The heavily reinforced skeleton makes the combat endoskeleton recipient much more durable and impregnable. The character's bones are unbreakable and nearly impenetrable, effectively shielding most of the character's vital organs behind a layer of armor. The attachment points of the recipient's muscles are surgically adjusted, allowing the character to handle the increased skeletal mass. Once the character learns to compensate for the increased weight, the augmented skeletal system effectively increases the recipient's physical strength, allowing heavier weights to be supported and blows to be struck with greater force. Finally, the character is equipped with built-in melee weapons. The endoskeleton is fashioned so as to provide the character with retractable claws, forearm or ankle blades, or protruding knuckle-spikes. The endoskeleton is not without drawbacks, however; the recipient is left especially vulnerable to electricity and magnetism based attacks. The mass of the endoskeleton also somewhat hampers movement.



## COMBAT ENDOSKELETON RECIPIENT

PL Adjustment: 0

**Note:** Many of the feats and powers granted by the template have the Limited-only vs. physical attacks flaw. Physical attacks include most melee attacks, ranged attacks such as bullets and thrown objects, and the Sonic and Vibration energy types.

**Feats:** Durability (**Flaw:** Limited-Only works vs. physical attacks), Immunity (critical hits; **Flaw:** Limited-only vs. physical attacks) Immunity (pressure; **Flaw:** only vs. high pressure), Penetrating Attack (with Natural Weapon).

**Powers:** Amazing Save (*Damage*) +5 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: Only vs. physical attacks Cost: 1 pp; Total 5pp], Density Control +1 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaws: Limited-Density Increase, Permanent; Cost: 5 pp; Total: 5 pp], Immutable Form (*bought as Amazing Save: Reflex*) +3 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: Limited-Only works against Transformation attacks; Cost: ; Total: ] + Natural Weapon +4 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Cost: 2 ; Total: 8], Super-Strength +1 [**Source:** Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: No bonus to skill rolls; Cost: 4 pp; Total: 4 pp ].

**Weaknesses:** Disabled (*cumbersome*), Vulnerable (*electrical attacks*), Vulnerable (*magnetic attacks*)

## WEAKNESSES

**Disability (*cumbersome*):** A combat endoskeleton is a massive apparatus, even if constructed of relatively lightweight metals. Despite some compensatory increase in the character's physical strength, the endoskeleton does hinder the character's movements to an extent. The character suffers a – 3 penalty to Acrobatics, Move Silently, and Swim (*lack of buoyancy*) skill checks.

**Vulnerable (*electrical attacks*):** As might be expected, a skeletal system augmented by a framework of high-tech metal alloys renders the character more vulnerable to electrical attacks than otherwise. A combat endoskeleton recipient receives no bonus to Damage saving throws made against electrical attacks (*straight d20 roll only*)

**Vulnerable (*magnetic attacks*):** The recipient of a combat endoskeleton must be especially wary of magnetic attacks. An opponent with the Energy Control: Magnetic power can choose to use the power to make lethal attacks against the character (*Damage Class = Power Rank*), although such attacks require extra effort on the part of the opponent (*treat as a Power Stunt*). The character receives no bonus to Damage throws against such

attacks.

## LEAVING THE TEMPLATE

Leaving this template is especially difficult; it requires some means of separating the endoskeleton from the character's skeletal structure without inflicting massive internal trauma. This is no mean feat, as the endoskeleton was designed to remain permanently bonded to the character. Making such an attempt requires a team of medical and technical personnel in an appropriate setting (*combination of lab and surgical theater*.) At least one of those making the attempt must have at least one rank of Super-Intelligence, and possess a total of 15 skill ranks in both Medicine and Science (*engineering, metallurgy, or similar discipline*). The attempt requires at least two full game sessions; one when the character is examined and the operation planned, and another when the process is attempted. The individual supervising the procedure must then spend one Hero Point and roll two separate DC 25 skill checks, one against Medical skill, another against Science skill. Succeeding on both rolls means the endoskeleton was successfully removed, although the character is still rendered unconscious for the next hour and disabled for the next 24 hours (*reduce time by one hour for each rank in Regeneration and/or Super-Constitution*.) Hero points cannot be used to improve the character's condition. If the doctor/scientist in charge of the task fails either skill check, the operation is a failure and the character falls into a near-death coma. The character is considered to be dying, and must succeed on a DC 10 Fortitude saving throw or perish; the saving throw must be made again once each hour, at a cumulative +1 bonus. If the save succeeds by 10 or more or the character rolls a natural 20, the character's condition improves to unconscious and disabled (*as above*.)

## CUSTOMIZATION

### metal-heads need not apply:

The endoskeleton is composed of non-metallic, non-ferrous materials. Maybe the character's skeleton is reinforced with space-age polymer plasters or the character's bones are now knit together in a network of ultra-tough nylon strands. The character's skeleton becomes more flexible than increasing the Amazing Save (*Damage*) power by +1 and granting the character Super-Skill (*escape-artist*) +4. This type of endoskeleton has no particular vulnerability to electrical attacks or magnetic attacks, but is sensitive to sudden temperature extremes (*Vulnerable to either Cold or Heat attacks, Game Master's choice*.) The template's PL adjustment is increased by +1. This leads to an unbalanced character, so the character's player must devote all future power points the character earns to "paying off" the additional power level before points can be spent for other purposes. If the character leaves the template, the GM should allow the player to redistribute any points spent for this purpose.

### Radical Reconstruction:

The cyber-surgeons didn't stop with augmenting the subject's skeleton; indeed, the character has been rebuilt almost from the inside out. The character's physique is bulked up through muscle grafts, connective tissues are strengthened via chemical treatments, and cardiovascular capacities are artificially expanded. The character's skin is replaced with a tough, armor-like hide, laced with metal-mesh or impact-absorbing gels. Genetic and/or hormonal alterations enhance the character's healing rate, allowing the subject to survive the horrendous reconstruction-barely. The character is much more physically formidable, a veritable walking dreadnought, but at a dear cost; the character can no longer pass for human and suffers from chronic, throbbing pain.

## COMBAT ENDOSKELETON RECEIPT (RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION)

### PL Adjustment: 0

**Feats:** Durability, Endurance, Immunity (*critical hits*; *Flaw: Limited-only vs. physical attacks*), Immunity (*pressure*; *Flaw: only vs. high pressure*), Penetrating Attack (*with Natural Weapon*).

**Powers:** Density Control +1 [*Source: Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaws: Limited-Density Increase, Permanent; Cost: 5 pp; Total: 5 pp*], Immutable Form (bought as Amazing Save: Reflex) +3 [*Source: Super-Science; Extra: Innate: Flaw: Limited-Only works against Transformation attacks; Cost: 1 pp; Total: 3 pp*], Natural Weapon +4 [*Source: Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Cost: 2 ; Total: 8*], Protection (*Damage*) +4 [*Source: Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Cost: 3 pp; Total 12 pp*], Regeneration +1 [*Source: Super-Science; Cost: 2 pp; Total: 2 pp*], Super-Strength +3 [*Source: Super-Science; Extra: Innate; Flaw: No bonus to skill rolls; Cost: 4 pp; Total: 12 pp*].

**Weaknesses:** Disabled (*addiction*), Disabled (*cumbersome*), Disabled (*subject to attacks that affect inanimate*), Disturbing, Vulnerable (*electricity*).

### WEAKNESSES

**Disabled (*addiction-pain killers*):** The character suffers long-term, lingering pain, pain so intense that it can be dulled only by the most potent pain killing drugs available. Unfortunately, such drugs are physically and psychologically addictive, resulting in dependency. The character must make a Will save (*DC 20*) each day such drugs are not taken. If the save is failed, the character becomes fatigued, and risks further decline; the condition worsens each day (*fatigued to exhausted, exhausted to unconscious, unconscious to dying*) until the Will save is made. Each day the DC of the saving throw increases by

+1. The character's condition improves by one step for each full day of rest.

**Disturbing:** The radical reconstruction process leaves the character with an imposing, even terrifying physical presence. The character was rebuilt to function as a human war machine, with little attention given to aesthetic considerations. One who has undergone such a process is up to six inches taller than before, massively built, with a bulging, unnaturally proportioned musculature. Skin is now akin to armor plate, sandpaper, or even rhinoceros hide. The character is adorned with various knobs, bumps, and ridges. As a result, all Bluff and Diplomacy skill rolls made by the character suffer a -5 penalty.

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### Artwork: Tony Perna

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