

SPECIAL EFFECTS

The Powers in *Champions* are explained thoroughly in game terms – you know how many dice of damage you can cause for a 50 Power Point investment, or the strength of your 60 Power Point Force Field. What the Power descriptions don't tell you is what your Powers look like or exactly how they're caused. Those Special Effects have been left undefined on purpose. It's up to *you* to figure out the special effects of your Powers.

The special effects of a Power define exactly how the Power works, what the Power looks like, and any other incidental effects associated with the Power's use. Sometimes minor advantages and disadvantages are attached to the Power because of the special effects, although these don't change the cost of the Power. However, any major Limitations or Advantages would change the cost of the Power (*see Power Advantages and Power Limitations*).

All Powers that would normally cost END to use must have a visible special effect. If you want an Invisible Force Field or Energy Blast, you have to buy the Power Advantage Invisible Power Effects. The special effects can take any form you want, as long as it's clear the power comes from your character. When you buy the power Energy Blast, for instance, there is no set way that your Energy Blast is performed. The energy blast may come from your fingertips, your eyes, or your forehead. The energy may be lightning, fire, cold, sonics, radiation, or whatever. Rather than list each type of Energy Blast we could think of, we let you choose what type of energy you project. *You* define the special effects of your power.

When choosing Powers in *Champions*, always start with the I and work backwards to the *cause*. For instance, if you want your character to be able to throw lightning bolts, you won't find "lightning bolt" on the Powers list. Instead, ask yourself, "What do lightning bolts do?" Well, they cause damage, primarily; this effect is definitely offensive, so look on the Offensive Powers list to see if any Powers sound similar. "Energy Blast," "Killing Attack (Ranged)," and "Flash" all sound likely. Reading through the descriptions of each one, you decide that Energy Blast is most appropriate for the kind of lightning bolts your hero would throw. Then buy Energy Blast at whatever cost you like, and call the resulting attack a "Lightning Bolt."

The special effects of your Power can contain minor advantages and disadvantages otherwise too small to reflect with Power Advantages or Power Limitations. The GM should feel free to play up both the minor advantages and the minor disadvantages that he feels the Power gives you. Of course, once the advantages and limitations of your Power become very significant, they can (and should) be with greater or lesser cost for the Power.

Example:

Howler has bought Energy Blast, and she has defined her Energy Blast as a sonic attack. Since her attack is sound, it wouldn't work in a vacuum, and would probably work better underwater (perhaps adding one or two D6, or becoming a small Area Effect). The GM might allow her to shatter glass in a room without rolling an attack. However, if Howler was playing in an outer space campaign, she should take a Limitation on the Energy Blast (doesn't work in a vacuum), since a vacuum would be a very common occurrence [sic].

Another example of special effects would be Flight with a glowing energy trail. Leaving a glowing energy trail when you fly can be useful, alerting heroes to your presence and position, but can also be annoying, alerting villains to your presence and position.

The GM should play with the special effects, letting them affect the game on occasion. Sometimes the only way that a hero can overcome his deathtrap or to save the world is by a creative use of his Powers and their special effects. Often, the special effects that you think of will lead to a design for a hero or villain.

When you define your hero's special effects you help yourself and the GM get a better handle on how the hero plays. Gliding with a parawing can be different from gliding by making yourself lighter than air. Extra running bought through a skateboard has some inherent limitations and advantages (it doesn't work well cross country, but can get velocity bonuses going downhill) that simple sprinting wouldn't have to deal with. The better you know your hero, the more fun he'll be to roleplay.

Occasionally you'll come up with a conception that doesn't fit directly into the rules. Perhaps you want your hero to have a Power or Skill that's not listed. You and the GM should then get together and see if any combination of Powers, Powers Limitations and Power Advantages can build the Power or Skill need. (Powers that are often helpful when attempting to fit strange effects into the game are Telekinesis and Force Field.)

Example:

Speedster wants to have Super Running, to be able to run at hundreds of KPH, to be able to run up buildings and down cliffs. Speedster might try to buy Running. But buying enough Running to go hundreds of KPH would be expensive, and Running doesn't allow moving up buildings and down cliffs. A closer fit to the character conception would be Flight, with the limitation that the Flight only works when the character is touching a surface. This limitation is worth +¼ (see Limitations).

Since the Power is defined as Flight, Speedster gets a good noncombat movement multiple (so that the character can run at hundreds of KPH), and Flight allows you to gain or lose altitude (so he can run up buildings and down cliffs).