

NBA CONVENTION HANDOUTS



GUMSHOE 101 for Players

General Abilities are how you get stuff done.

Sneaking, fighting, running... all these are done with General Abilities. If you have a General Ability rating of **8 or higher, you're incredibly talented** at that activity (and may get access to cool bonus stuff when using it, depending on which GUMSHOE game you're playing). If you don't have any rating at all in a General Ability, you stink at it and won't generally succeed at non-trivial tasks. A 0 in Driving, for instance, lets you drive to the store and back but you'd fail at any driving maneuvers difficult enough to require a die roll. In comparison, an 8 in Driving makes you an expert wheelman. Similarly, a 0 in Shooting means you're no good whatsoever at using firearms, while an 8 or higher in Shooting makes you an expert marksman. You get the idea.

It's traumatic for your dicebag, but **in GUMSHOE you'll only need one die: a d6**. Roll it. **Your Target Number is usually 4**; remember that. If you roll a 4 or higher with a General Ability like Athletics, you probably succeed.

Obviously, that would mean you only succeed half the time. **You raise these odds by spending points from your General Ability pools and adding them to your d6 roll**. Want to shoot someone? Spend 2 points from your shooting pool, add it to your d6, and you usually only fail if you roll a 1. Spend 3 points and you're guaranteed to hit even on a d6 roll of 1 (as $1 + 3 =$ the target number of 4). When your pool drops to 0, you're stuck just rolling a d6 until you get a rest and the GM says your pool refreshes.

Don't be shy about spending these points. Dropping enemies quickly is a great idea, and you'll have chances for your pools to refresh.

Investigative Abilities are how you learn stuff.

They're what makes GUMSHOE games unique. Ignore your General Abilities for a second and look over at your **Investigative Abilities**. These are broken into three sections to make things easier to find – *academic*, *interpersonal* and *technical* knowledge – but they all work pretty much the same way. **If you have 1 or more points in any of these, you're an expert at it**. This matters because during the game, all you need to do is **tell the GM that you're using an appropriate ability and you'll automatically get the clue** if there is one. Yes, automatically, no roll required. The fun here is in what you do with that information, not how you get it.

So let's say you're searching a private library for vital information. The GM may ask, "Do you have any points in Research?" Say yes and she'll tell you everything you can find out. No roll is ever required. Same thing with Interpersonal Abilities; if you have Flattery, tell the GM you're flattering someone (or better yet, roleplay it) and it will pay off.

Spend these points to get cool in-game advantages. Take the interpersonal ability Flirting, for example. You meet the evil mastermind's stunningly attractive protégé. Tell the GM you're Flirting with the NPC, and he or she will let slip important clues during the banter. Tell the GM you're spending 1 or more Flirting points to get cool stuff, though, and you'll get a special benefit; in this case, the protégé may become infatuated with you and double-cross his or her boss at the best possible time.

Just remember, **spending a point from an Investigative Ability doesn't stop you from knowing that topic**. It just limits how many times in a game you can ask for special cool stuff.

And really? That's it. Your GM can tell you anything else you need to know.

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

ACCOUNTING	<i>Academic</i>	You can spot embezzlement and fraud, track payments or conceal them
ARCHAEOLOGY	<i>Academic</i>	You excavate and study the structures and artifacts of historical cultures and civilizations.
ARCHITECTURE	<i>Academic</i>	You know how buildings and infrastructure are designed and constructed.
ART HISTORY	<i>Academic</i>	You're an expert on works of art and craft from an aesthetic and technical point of view.
ASTRONOMY	<i>Technical</i>	You study celestial objects, including the stars and planets.
BULLSHIT DETECTOR	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You can sometimes tell if people are trying to deceive you.
BUREAUCRACY	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You can get past officials, find whistleblowers, access official records.
CHEMISTRY	<i>Technical</i>	You can identify and synthesise compounds and understand their properties
COP TALK	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You can gain cooperation from the police, imply you are in law enforcement and get minor offenses overlooked
CRIMINOLOGY	<i>Academic</i>	You study crimes, and the methods for solving crimes, from laboratory techniques to psychological profiling.
CRYPTOGRAPHY	<i>Technical</i>	You're an expert in the making and breaking of codes in any language you can read
DATA RECOVERY	<i>Technical</i>	You use computer and electronic technology to retrieve and enhance seemingly inaccessible information or imagery on hard drives and other media.
DIAGNOSIS	<i>Academic</i>	You diagnose human disease, injuries, poisonings, and physical frailties. At a rating of 2 or more, you may have a medical license.
ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE	<i>Technical</i>	You're adept at the use of sound and video recording equipment to gather intelligence.
FLATTERY	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You're good at getting people to help you by complimenting them, as subtly or blatantly as they prefer.
FLIRTING	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You're adept at winning cooperation from people who find you sexually attractive.
FORENSIC PATHOLOGY	<i>Technical</i>	You study crime scenes and perform autopsies to determine cause and circumstances of death.
FORGERY	<i>Technical</i>	You fake things such as credentials, handwriting and art.
HIGH SOCIETY	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You know how to hang with the rich and famous, and how to chat them up without getting security called.
HISTORY	<i>Academic</i>	You know history, with an emphasis on its political, military, economic, and technological developments
HUMAN TERRAIN	<i>Academic</i>	You understand areas, structures, organizations, cultures, people, of a region
INTERROGATION	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You can extract information from people in your control
INTIMIDATION	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You can extract information through implied or actual threats or physical or mental domination
LANGUAGES	<i>Academic</i>	You are verbally fluent and literate in a number of languages, Rating 1=2,2=5,3=9, etc
LAW	<i>Academic</i>	You know the criminal and civil laws of your home jurisdiction well, and are broadly acquainted with foreign legal systems
MILITARY SCIENCE	<i>Academic</i>	You understand military history, strategy and tactics, and the weapons, technologies, and engineering techniques of the battlefield.
NEGOTIATION	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You are an expert in making deals with others, convincing them that the best arrangement for you is also the best for them.
NOTICE	<i>Technical</i>	This is the generic ability for spotting a hidden clue, general situational awareness, or noticing a non-threatening visual anomaly.
OCCULT STUDIES	<i>Academic</i>	You're an expert in the historical study of magic, superstition, and sorcery from the Stone Age to the present.
OUTDOOR SURVIVAL	<i>Technical</i>	You have worked and lived outdoors and in the wild, during a rural upbringing or extensive military service "in country."
PHARMACY	<i>Technical</i>	You are able to identify and compound drugs and medicines
PHOTOGRAPHY	<i>Technical</i>	You're proficient in the use of cameras, including still, motion-picture, digital, and video photography.
REASSURANCE	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You get people to do what you want by putting them at ease.
RESEARCH	<i>Academic</i>	You know how to find factual information from books, records, official sources, and the Internet.
STREETWISE	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You know how to behave in the criminal underworld

TRADECRAFT	<i>Interpersonal</i>	You know how to utilize the techniques of conventional espionage agents, and how to talk to them if you must hold a meet.
TRAFFIC ANALYSIS	<i>Technical</i>	You know how to boil down a mass of data — raw signals intel, phone records, surveillance tapes — and extract patterns
URBAN SURVIVAL	<i>Technical</i>	You are familiar with working and living in cities, especially their seamier underbelly.
VAMPIROLOGY	<i>Academic</i>	The subset of occultism dealing directly with vampires

GENERAL ABILITIES

ATHLETICS	<i>General</i>	Running, throwing, jumping, dodging and climbing etc. Less than 8 and your Hit Threshold is 3, otherwise 4.
CONCEAL	<i>General</i>	You can hide things from view and conceal them from search.
COVER	<i>General</i>	This ability represents your stash of cover identities. Assign each some points as required
DIGITAL INTRUSION	<i>General</i>	You can enter secure databases without formal access, and read, download, alter, or delete data and records therein
DISGUISE	<i>General</i>	You can alter your appearance, posture, and voice to be unrecognizable.
DRIVING	<i>General</i>	You're a skilled defensive driver, capable of wringing high performance from even the most recalcitrant vehicle
EXPLOSIVE DEVICES	<i>General</i>	You're an expert in bombs and booby-traps.
FILCH	<i>General</i>	Pick pockets, plant, hide or steal objects
GAMBLING	<i>General</i>	You are conversant with the rules and etiquette of all forms of gambling, from Texas hold 'em and roulette to horse racing and numbers rackets.
HAND-TO-HAND	<i>General</i>	You can hold your own in unarmed combat, whether you wish to kill, knock out, restrain, or evade your opponent.
INFILTRATION	<i>General</i>	You're good at placing yourself inside places you have no right to be.
MECHANICS	<i>General</i>	You're good at building, repairing, operating, and disabling mechanical, electrical, or electronic devices.
MEDIC	<i>General</i>	You can perform first aid on sick or injured individuals.
NETWORK	<i>General</i>	This ability represents your network of professional contacts. Assign each one points
PILOTING	<i>General</i>	You can pilot small boats or single-engine light aircraft with professional aplomb and serene confidence.
PREPAREDNESS	<i>General</i>	Allows you to have minor bits of gear to suit the situation
SENSE TROUBLE	<i>General</i>	Spot danger - only one player makes the attempt each time
SHOOTING	<i>General</i>	You are adept with personal firearms, including their field stripping, repair, and identification.
SHRINK	<i>General</i>	You can provide comfort, perspective and solace to the mentally troubled. Spend 1 point to restore 2 points of Stability.
SURVEILLANCE	<i>General</i>	You're good at watching and following targets without revealing your presence.
WEAPONS	<i>General</i>	You are skilled in the use of personal hand weapons such as knives, swords, or flexible batons.
HEALTH	<i>General</i>	Your ability to sustain injuries / a measure of the narrative plausibility of you not being damaged by an attack
STABILITY	<i>General</i>	Your Stability rating indicates your resistance to mental trauma and psychic attack, along with general willpower and self-possession.

SPECIAL THRILLER CHASE RULES

Unless specified, both runner and pursuer can use these rules. Required ability levels are for ability *ratings*, not current pool size.

ATTACKING DURING CHASES

- Spend 3 from chase pool (no spend needed for passengers)
- +1 to Hit Threshold of target

GEAR DEVIL

- Requires Driving or Piloting 8+ and descriptive phrase
- Grants 3-point refresh once per chase

PARKOUR

- Requires Athletics 8+ and descriptive phrase
- Grants 3-point Athletics refresh once per chase

RAMMING

- Lead must be 1 or 2
- Spend 3 points from chase pool
- Player always rolls against Difficulty 4

Ram rolls use only the following modifiers and rules:

- On the defensive (avoiding being rammed):** The player adds his vehicle's Maneuver to the die roll (against a Difficulty of 4), plus any other spends he makes.
- If he fails, the Lead alters in the opposition's favor by 1.
 - If he rolls an unmodified 1 and fails, he crashes.
 - If he succeeds, the rammer must spend 2 points immediately from her chase pool; if her pool is insufficient, the Lead alters in the player's favor by 1 for every point by which she falls short.

On the offensive (ramming):

- The player *adds* her vehicle's Maneuver to the Difficulty of 4, plus any other spends she makes. (Heavier vehicles lower Difficulty.)
- If she fails, she must spend 2 points immediately from her chase pool; if her pool is insufficient, the Lead alters in the opposition's favor by 1 for every point by which she falls short.
 - If she succeeds, the Lead alters in her favor by 1.
 - If she rolls an unmodified 6 and succeeds, the other vehicle crashes.

SUDDEN ESCAPE (RUNNER ONLY)

- Requires Lead 7+ and success in chase round contest
 - Make another General test at Difficulty 1 higher than previous contest
- Success:** escape the chase instead of changing Lead
- Failure:** crash or fall, double damage

SWERVE

- Requires equal or higher Maneuver rating; must be in third+ round of chase
- Spend 3 points from chase pool
- Ignore Speed bonus on next roll
- Next Lead change is doubled
- If chase ends, loser crashes or falls

TAKE THE WHEEL!

- Spend 2 points from chase pool
- NPC driver takes over; your chase rolls at +1 Difficulty
- If runner, cannot Raise while NPC is driving

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Any investigator can influence the chase with an investigative ability. This is usually free. Each ability can be used once (per party, per chase).

BENEFITS

- **Partial refresh** of the chase ability: best when the benefit harder to quantify, or when it involves a brief respite.
- **Difficulty adjustment:** reflects positional or tactical advantages.
- **Opposition spends first:** reflects something that forces the enemy to slow down or become predictable.
- **Opposition pool reductions:** best when a change in the chase puts the other side at a sudden and dramatic disadvantage.
- **Lead change:** best when a change in the chase puts the agents at a sudden and dramatic advantage.
- **Special Rule setup:** allows a specific special rule such as a Swerve or Sudden Escape, either earlier or easier than normal.

THRILLER COMBAT OPTIONS 1

Required ability levels are for ability *ratings*, not current pool size. Spends to activate abilities never add to die rolls.

AUTOFIRE

- Spend 3 Shooting per 1 extra damage die rolled on the target
- Spend 3 Shooting per 1 extra target within 3m of initial target

CALLED SHOT

- Increase Hit Threshold of foe depending on specific target
- Increase damage depending on target and on whether you used a weapon (gun or melee) or hand-to-hand attack.
- May then spend 6 points from attack ability to move foe from Hurt to Seriously Wounded or from Seriously Wounded to dead.

See full table and rules on p. 72; additional damage not cumulative with +2 for Point-Blank gunshots:

CALLED SHOT TO	HIT THRESHOLD MODIFIER	ADDITIONAL WEAPON DAMAGE	ADDITIONAL UNARMED DAMAGE
Chest (from front/back)	+2/+4	+2	—
Eye	+4	+2 and blind for 2 rounds	+3
Head	+3	+2	—
Heart	+3	+3	—
Joint, Groin	+3	—	+2
Throat	+3	+2; beheaded if cutting attack drops foe's Health to 0 (or -12)	+2

CRITICAL HIT

- If attack die roll is a 6 **and** you exceed target Hit Threshold by 5+
- Extra die of damage

DISARM

Make a Called Shot to a weapon in hand (+3 to Hit Threshold). If successful:

- Shooting disarms foe, may damage weapon.
- Weapons disarms foe with lighter weapon, or any foe on a 6.
- Hand-to-Hand against alert foe prevents foe from attacking you with that weapon, sets up Hand-to-Hand contest for possession of weapon.
- Hand-to-Hand against surprised foe disarms foe; you take the weapon.
- Hand-to-Hand disarms any foe on a 6; you take the weapon.

Make a Hand-to-Hand Called Shot to grab a short, holstered weapon (+3 to Hit Threshold). If successful, spend 3 points of Filch or Weapons; you take the weapon.

EXTRA ATTACKS

No melee weapon (except swords) with damage modifier over -1 can have Extra Attacks.

HAND-TO-HAND OR WEAPONS

- Requires Hand-to-Hand or Weapons 8+ and successful hit
- Spend 3 Hand-to-Hand or Weapons plus 2 Health for second attack

SHOOTING

- Requires Shooting 8+ and successful hit
- Spend 4 Shooting plus 1 Stability for second attack; 8 Shooting and 2 Stability for third attack; etc.

MULTIPLE TARGETS

Second target's Hit Threshold +2; third target's Hit Threshold +3; etc.

TWO-FISTED FIREARMS

- Requires pistols in both hands at beginning of action
- Spend 3 Shooting plus 2 Athletics to attack with both pistols
- Name target or targets (+2 to second target's Hit Threshold, as above) before firing; you cannot switch in between shots
- Spend 9 Shooting plus 6 Athletics to attack again with both pistols

FEINT

- Give up your attack for a round
- Spend 1 Hand-to-Hand or Weapons per -1 to foe's Hit Threshold; max -3
- Applies to all attacks (including allies) until end of your next round

JUMPING IN

- At the end of any other character's action, if you have not yet acted
- Spend 4 Athletics or 3 Shooting, Hand-to-Hand, or Weapons
- Immediately attack with the ability you spent from (or with any ability, if you spent Athletics)
- Change in combat order is permanent unless someone else jumps in

EVASIVE MANEUVERS

- Declare at beginning of your action, does not use your turn, lasts until beginning of your next action
- Spend 2 Athletics per +1 to Hit Threshold, max +3
- Your attacks suffer a -2 penalty per +1 to your Hit Threshold

THRILLER COMBAT OPTIONS 2

MARTIAL ARTS

- Requires Hand-to-Hand or Weapons 8+ and descriptive phrase
- Grants 3-point Hand-to-Hand or Weapons refresh once per fight

MOOK SHIELD

- Requires Hand-to-Hand 8+
 - **Mook in Point-Blank range:** Spend 3 Hand-to-Hand and attack
 - **Mook in Close range:** spend 3 Hand-to-Hand and 2 Athletics and attack
- If successful, you grab the mook and:
- All ranged attacks against you that miss hit the mook
 - Mook provides -4 Armor against attacks that hit
 - Must drop mook or spend 3 Shooting to fire a weapon

RECKLESS ATTACKS

- Spend 1 Athletics to lower Hit Thresholds of both you (against all attacks) and one target (against your attacks); max -3.
- Lasts until beginning of your next action

 SMASHES AND THROWS

- Spend 2 Hand-to-Hand and attack foe in Point-Blank range; if successful
- **Smash:** against breakable or hard object, -1 damage; against projecting and hard object, +0 damage
- **Throw:** foe lands at Close range, moves to end of combat order; thrown into breakable or hard object, -2 damage; thrown into hard and projecting object, -1 damage
- **Throw at Window:** +2 to foe's Hit Threshold; on roll of 6 (lower for mooks) they go through window; -1 damage from broken glass plus fall; Athletics test (Difficulty 5) for name NPCs and agents to avoid fall

 SNIPIING

- Requires Shooting 8+ and taking one round to aim with a rifle
- **Target aware of you:** Hit Threshold -1
- **Target unaware of you:** Hit Threshold -2
- **Your rifle has a scope:** Extended Range attacks (see p. 67) are free

SPECIAL WEAPONS TRAINING

- Requires Shooting or Weapons 8+
- Spend 6 *build points* for additional +1 damage to one make of weapon
- **Shooting:** may take SWT for one light (+0 becomes +1) and one heavy (+1 becomes +2) firearm
- **Weapons:** may take SWT for one knife (-1 becomes +0) and one other make of melee weapon

SUPPORT MOVES

- Requires Athletics 8+
- Make Athletics test vs. Difficulty 4, describe support move
- Margin of success applies as bonus to ally's next attack roll

 SUPPRESSIVE FIRE

- Requires Shooting 8+ and an automatic weapon
 - Make a Shooting test against a Difficulty based on the width blocked to foes by fire: 3 (alleyway) to 6 (3-lane road; hangar doors)
 - You can maintain the line without rolling for 2 rounds (pistol) or 5 rounds (assault rifle or SMG); then you must take one action to reload
- Foes must make Athletics test against your result to cross:
- **Failure:** damage and they stay put
 - **Success by 0-4:** damage and they cross
 - **Success by 5+:** cross without damage

TECHNOTHRILLER MONOLOGUE

- Requires Shooting 8+ and descriptive phrase
- Grants 3-point Shooting refresh once per fight

STABILITY LOSS

INCIDENT	STABILITY LOSS
🔥 You see a fresh corpse; you witness a killing	1
🔥 A human opponent attacks you with evident intent to do serious harm	2
You experience a strong unnatural sensation such as intense déjà vu, "missing time," or hallucinations	2
You witness acts of torture	2
🔥 A human opponent attacks you with evident intent to kill	3
🔥 You kill someone in a fight	3
🔥 You see a particularly grisly murder or accident scene	3
You see a supernatural creature from a distance	3
You witness an obviously unnatural, but not necessarily threatening, omen or magical effect — a wall covered in horrible insects, a talking cat, or a bleeding window	3
You learn that one of your Network contacts has been violently killed	3
You see hundreds of corpses; you witness a large battle	4
You see a supernatural creature up close	4
You spend a week in solitary confinement	4
You learn that a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability has been violently killed	4
You discover the corpse of one of your Network contacts	4
You discover the corpse of a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability	5
You are attacked by a supernatural creature, or by a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability	5
You witness a clearly supernatural or impossible killing	5
You witness or experience an obviously unnatural, and threatening, omen or magical effect — a cold hand clutches your heart, a swarm of bees pours out of your mouth	5
You kill someone in cold blood; you torture someone	5
You see one of your Network contacts killed	5
You see a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability killed	6
You are tortured for an hour or longer	6
You discover that you have committed cannibalism	6
You are possessed by some outside force, but conscious while it operates your body unspeakably	7
You speak with someone you know well who you know to be dead	7
You are attacked by a single gigantic supernatural creature or by a horde of supernatural creatures	7
You see a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability killed in a particularly gruesome manner or in a way you are helpless to avert	8
You kill a friend, loved one, or Source of Stability	8

You manifest PTSD the night after a horrific incident involving a flying monstrosity. A noted Geneva specialist then cures you and sends you back into the fray.

Later, a firefight in a bat-filled temple to Hecate in Sicily shatters you again. You develop an Obsession (specifically a fear of the dark), which manifests immediately

and sends you screaming out of the cave. The Director rules that bats and darkness are close enough to flying monstrosities to potentially re-trigger your PTSD: you roll