

Cyberware

Various technological implants, chemical modifications, and structural enhancements to the metahuman body, collectively known as cyberware, can improve a character's attributes and abilities. Certain cyberware makes it possible for a character to accomplish extraordinary feats, such as acting three times as often as an un-augmented person (wired reflexes), recording a conversation across the room in a crowded bar (cyberear with select sound filter), or sending mental commands via wireless link to electronic devices.

Implanting cyberware in the body is an invasive procedure, so cyberware has an **Essence Cost**. The (meta)human body has limits—only a certain amount of cyberware can be installed before the body runs out of Essence and dies. Cyberware is particularly damaging to the magically active, because their Magic attribute is dependent on their Essence. Some burned-out mages, who have lost a bit of their Magic from accidents, drugs, or other abuses to their bodies, attempt to compensate for their weakened magical ability with more cyberware. This path is a rapid downward spiral, and more than one such runner has found himself unable to cast anything but the most weakened spells.

The more cyberware a character has installed, the more “in-human” she becomes. Overly-cybered characters tend to become a bit detached, and the empathy between them and other metahumans suffers for it. While some cyberware is so common that it can be implanted during lunch break at a corner bodyshop and is no longer remarkable to the general public (especially cybereyes and datajacks), heavy amounts of visible cyberware can still have a startling effect on many people. Implants are also an impediment to magical healing.

Many pieces of cyberware are considered to be dangerous and are either restricted to licensed security personnel or are outright illegal. This includes most cyber-implant weaponry, high level wired reflexes, and so forth. Sporting 'ware like this can get a character heavily fined, jailed, or worse. This tends to make travel difficult for some, as most airports and border checkpoints scan for cyberware. Security companies have invented several methods of forcibly restraining people from using various implants.

Cyberware can be quite expensive, especially if it is illegal. Black clinics operate in the shadows, providing 'ware and installation services for hefty fees. Many of them offer used cyberware, and will pay for bodies that sport still-useful implants. Corporations and governments operate their own high-level clinics, far from prying eyes. Depending on a character's background, there should be some explanation as to how the character obtained the cyberware she has, what she had to do to get it, and perhaps who she still owes for it. It should be noted that many employers are not against removing 'ware installed in former employees.

For a complete listing of various pieces of cyberware and their effects, see p. 330.

Bioware

Whereas cyberware is mechanical and alien to the body, **bioware** is of the flesh. Bioware implants usually enhance the body's existing functions by replacing old organs and organic systems with new and improved organs and systems. Bioware is harder to detect and easier on the body than cyberware, but it is typically harder to acquire and more expensive. Bioware can allow characters to do

extraordinary things such as see in the dark (cat's eyes), sleep only three hours per night (sleep regulator), or move with more agility (enhanced articulation).

While it's true that bioware is less invasive to the body than cyberware, it still has an unbalancing effect on the character's holistic systems. Bioware also has an Essence Cost, just like cyberware.

For a listing of bioware items and their effects, see p. 338.

Implant Grades

Higher grades of cyberware and bioware known as **alphaware**, **betaware**, and **deltaware** are available. Alphaware is more Essence friendly than standard cyberware, but is more costly as well. Betaware and deltaware are even more Essence-friendly and expensive, but are also harder to acquire and are not available to starting characters.

Additionally, there is a higher grade of bioware that has been grown from the recipient's own cloned cells, known as **cultured bioware**. Cultured bioware is more Essence friendly than standard bioware, but is more costly as well.

CONTACTS

Contacts are non-player characters (NPCs) that gamemasters can use to make *Shadowrun* games richer, more unpredictable, and more exciting for players.

Contacts are vital in *Shadowrun*. These are the people a character knows who can reveal information important to the character's work, legitimate or not. Contacts are the purveyors of perhaps the most vital commodity of the 2070s: *information*. Need to know who's doing what to whom? What the latest street rumor is? Where a special piece of gear can be found? Ask a contact.

Contacts are not necessarily friends—many of them expect to be paid or to receive favors in turn. Contacts have their own lives and their own needs, so they may occasionally turn to the character for help (providing a new scenario basis). Contacts also vary in their dependability and trustworthiness—presumably if a character treats her contacts well and plays them straight, they can be trusted. A character will not get anywhere in the dicey world of *Shadowrun* if she doesn't trust *anyone*. To represent these factors, each contact has two ratings: Loyalty (indicating the depth of the relationship) and Connection (how networked they are), both described below.

Player characters start off with contacts acquired during character creation. These are contacts the character has established a working relationship with based on past legwork and social interactions. It is also possible to acquire contacts during the game, but only through roleplaying. Characters cannot “buy” contacts once the game begins; they have to earn them the hard way.

For more information, see *Contacts*, p. 278.

Loyalty Rating

This is the contact's level of loyalty towards the character—how much the contact will inconvenience himself, protect the character, or put himself at risk for the character. See p. 278.

Connection Rating

A contact's Connection rating indicates how useful he is in terms of his own network of contacts and influence. Connection