

GURPS

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY™ 12

NINJA



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*Ninjas are
fast, smooth,
cool, strong,
powerful,
and sweet.*

*– Robert
Hamburger*

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INTRODUCTION

. . . the ninja are awash in myth and legend. Almost every improbable martial-arts feat appears in ninja lore! They're famous as masters of disguise, weapon use, unarmed combat, acting, and technology.

– *GURPS Martial Arts*

Ever since the beginning of dungeon delving, players have itched to be ninja. Not just thieves or martial artists or sneaky rogues of whatever stripe, but *ninja*. Black-clad, tabi-wearing, shuriken-throwing masters of ninjitsu. Two of the mixed profession lenses in *Dungeon Fantasy 3: The Next Level*, the thief-martial artist and martial artist-thief, were aimed at scratching this itch. Nevertheless, any ninja aficionado knows that adding Stealth to your martial artist or learning Karate with your thief doesn't make you a ninja. After all, where are the gadgets, the exotic weapons, and the black outfit?



They are all *right here*.

Now your character can be a true ninja. Not just a pretender to the mantle, either. The special training, both of the mind and the body, are yours. The exotic Asian weaponry. The sneaky tools and strange powers of the Forbidden East have come deep into the dungeon in the form of *you*.

So come closer, young *shinobi*, and learn the ways of the ninja . . .

DUNGEON FANTASY CAMPAIGNS AND THIS BOOK

The abilities, powers, and perks listed in *Ninja Training* (pp. 4-7) are *all* ninja-specific. Either outsiders who may access similar capabilities (such as thieves) already have them, or they are inappropriate outside the context of the ninja's world.

The equipment, powders, and additional poisons are relevant for any campaign, whether they feature ninja or not. The special combat option, *Hook* (p. 13), is suitable for anyone using an appropriate weapon. Ninja weapons are available to any user; but the GM may wish to restrict them to ninja, to help these shadowy warriors secure their own niche.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter V. Dell'Orto was raised, in New Jersey, by ninja. He started roleplaying in 1981, with *Dungeons & Dragons*, and has played *GURPS* since *Man to Man*. He has been active as a *GURPS* playtester, editor, and contributing author since 1996, and has written many *GURPS* articles for *Pyramid* magazine. He co-authored *GURPS Martial Arts* along with the

legendary Master Ninja Sean Punch; *GURPS Low-Tech* with William Stoddard, Matt Riggsby, and Dan Howard; and *GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators* with Volker Bach. Peter is an enthusiastic martial artist. He has fought amateur MMA in the SHOOTO organization in Japan and in submission grappling at Grappler's Quest. He currently trains Kachin Bando and holds a *shodan* rank in Kendo. His other hobbies include fitness, reading, painting miniatures, Japan, and music.

By his ability, the result of carefully planned and arduous training, the ninja became a legend.

– *Donn Draeger and Robert W. Smith,*
Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts

NINJA ABILITY TABLE

Ninja train in the four “ways” – the Way of Death, the Way of the Mind, the Way of Shadows, and the Way of Tools. These merely serve to group the ninja abilities and describe a ninja’s focus. Almost all ninja learn abilities from multiple paths!

Ability	Prerequisites
Way of Death	
Dual Ready	Killing Strike 2 <i>and</i> Ninja Tools 2
Enhanced Parry 1 (All Weapons)	Ninja Talent 1+
Enhanced Parry 2 (All Weapons)	Enhanced Parry 1 <i>and</i> Ninja Talent 2+
Killing Strike 1	Ninja Talent 1+
Killing Strike 2	Killing Strike 1 <i>and</i> Ninja Talent 2+
Lethal Weapon	Killing Strike 2, Ninja Talent 3+, <i>and</i> Ninja Tools 2

Way of the Mind	
Danger Sense	Ninja Talent 1+
Mind Shield 1+	Ninja Talent 1+
Peripheral Vision	Danger Sense
Shifting Visage	Ninja Talent 3+ <i>and</i> One With Shadows

Way of Shadows	
Catfall	Ninja Talent 1+
Enhanced Dodge 1	Ninja Talent 1+
One With Shadows	Silence 2
Perfect Balance	Catfall <i>or</i> Ninja Talent 2+
Shadow Walker	Ninja Talent 3+, Perfect Balance, Silence 2, <i>and</i> Super Jump 1
Silence 1	Ninja Talent 1+
Silence 2	Ninja Talent 2+ <i>and</i> Silence 1
Super Jump 1	Ninja Talent 1+

Way of Tools	
Ninja Tools 1	Ninja Talent 1+
Ninja Tools 2	Ninja Tools 1
Ninja Tools 3+	Ninja Talent 2+ <i>and</i> Ninja Tools 2

ADVANTAGES

All ninja having the following advantage.

Weapon Master (Ninja Weapons) 35 points

Weapon Master (Ninja Weapons) functions as the Weapon Master advantage (see p. B99) for the garrote, katana, all knives, naginata, nunchaku, kusari, shuriken, spear, and

staff; any weapon with the Ninja modifier (see p. 13); and any weapon listed in *Ninja Gear* (pp. 12-19). This includes damage bonuses, halving of penalties for multiple attacks and defenses, and improved defaults. When in doubt as to whether a weapon is a ninja weapon, try to visualize it in a ninja movie. If it doesn’t fit, if it doesn’t feel suitably exotic, then it isn’t a proper ninja weapon. As always, the GM’s word is final. *Especially* if he’s a ninja.

DISADVANTAGES

Ninja possess two disadvantages central to their Ninja Training.

Vow

see p. B160

All ninja must take the following vows.

Vow (Ninja Secrecy): Aging ninja ritually transfer their power by handpicking promising successors, training them extensively, and presenting the survivors with special gear. Lesser ninja must swear upon their powers never to attempt this, because the more people who learn ninja secrets, the less effective each ninja becomes! To enforce this, ninja training has a built-in safety measure: An ordinary ninja who tries to sell, trade, or give ninja equipment (e.g., Gizmos) or training (e.g., ninja skills) to a non-ninja suffers immediate loss of all abilities with the Ninja Training modifier (p. 4). The offending ninja’s clan *will* sense this, whereupon he will be unable to regain his powers or acquire new training or gear until he presents himself to atone. Failure to do so after one full adventure means that his clan will send ninja equal in number and power to the miscreant and his allies, plus a master with 50% more points, to kill him, his would-be student, and anybody else they deem an accessory. Seeing isn’t understanding, though – ninja are free to wield their abilities and equipment on behalf of others, just not to share. *-5 points.*

Vow (Own no more than what can be carried): Ninja delve for the good of the clan! An individual ninja may not accumulate goods or money for the sake of accumulation – he may carry what he needs but no more. However, he’s honor-bound to insist on his fair share of any loot, spending what he needs to keep his ninja gear in good repair (or to buy new gear from his masters), and giving everything else to the clan. Failure to do so brings similar consequences to the previous Vow. *-10 points.*

SKILLS

Ninja Training allows you to learn Blind Fighting (p. B180), Hypnotism (p. B201), Invisibility Art (p. B202), Light Walk (p. B205), and Mental Strength (p. B209). Remember that Ninja Talent (p. 4) adds to all of these

Killing the wrong person happens. Ninjas know this. It’s useless to live in the past.

– Mantis Design, *Ninja Tips for Healthy Living*

NINJA TOOLS

Besides exotic weapons, ninja also use a number of specialized tools.

Blowpipe Mount. A leather and metal necklace that holds a metsubushi in “ready” position; a ninja can then Ready and fire the metsubushi in one second. Only one blowpipe mount can be used at a time; swapping in a metsubushi for another takes two hands and five seconds, plus the time to ready the metsubushi. \$10, 1 lb.

Climbing Pole, Collapsible, 10’. For climbing and poking. Breaks down to 2’ overall length; takes 10 seconds to assemble or collapse. Functions as a 10’ ladder or a 10’ pole. No Climbing roll required. Sturdy enough for climbing, but not for repeated combat use; if used as an improvised staff, it will no longer extend or retract. \$100, 6 lbs.

Firebox, Ninja’s. A small insulated metal box containing a heated stone. It takes only one second to open, and two seconds to stow. It provides a ready source of heat for igniting torches or other flammables. The box is watertight, allowing it to be submerged and used after surfacing. Stays sufficiently hot to light fires for 24 hours; it can be reheated between adventures for no cost. \$20, 1 lb.

Folding Raft. A cunningly built raft of straw, designed to fold down into a small pack. Comes with its own carrying bag, which also functions as part of the raft. Holds two SM 0 occupants sitting or one lying down, or 200 lbs., whichever is less. \$150, 10 lbs.

Ninja-to Saya. The sheath for a ninja-to. Rigid and hollow, it’s slightly longer than the ninja-to, leaving a space for concealing a small object; the sword itself retains its own Holdout modifier. The saya functions as a 2’ snorkel (great for hiding underwater!) and as a 3’ ladder (using the square ninja-to guard as a step). It can be wielded as a baton (p. B273), or as a functional blowpipe (p. B275) to disperse poison or elixir powders (see *Ninja Chemicals*, p. 16). Finally, the ninja fastens it to his waist with a 6’ cord, allowing him to pull it up after him when using it as a ladder. Adds \$300 and 1 lb. to a ninja-to’s cost and weight.

Tabi, Inflatable. Great for crossing watery obstacles without getting wet. These take 10 seconds each to put on and inflate, using the ninja’s own lung power and a small tube. Walking on water with these is slow (1 yard/second), and requires a roll against DX to avoid falling. *Running* on water is at Basic Move, but the roll is against DX-5! Otherwise, these provide DR 1 to the feet. \$50 and 2 lbs.

Tabi, Inflatable, Acid-Resistant: As inflatable tabi, meant to allow the ninja to walk across corrosive surfaces. As above, except that these provide DR 3 against corrosion attacks such as acid and slime monster goo, but no additional DR against other attacks. \$200, 2 lbs.

Tabi, Stealthy: These split-toed ninja slippers are especially soft and noise-reducing. Gives +1 to Stealth vs. Hearing rolls. \$100, 0.5 lb.

Tabi, Traction: These split-toed ninja slippers give excellent traction, but are much less stealthy than normal tabi: -1 to Stealth vs. Hearing rolls, but +1 to Climbing (when the feet can be used) or to DX rolls to keep footing in slippery conditions or on narrow ledges, ropes, etc. \$75, 0.5 lb.

Torch, Waterproof: A seemingly simple torch (see *Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 24) except that its chemically treated tar resists rain or splashes of water. If doused with sufficient water to extinguish a normal torch (GM’s call), it remains burning on 1-5 on 1d. Repeated exposures require repeated rolls. It cannot burn *submerged*, however – any immersion of one full second or more will extinguish it. \$12, 1 lb.

Equipping the Ninja

Ninja should revel in their special abilities and their special gear. *Ninja Secrets* (pp. 4-11) covers the first part, so let’s get to picking out the cool gear!

Start with the best ninja suit the adventurer can afford; this provides a basis of armor, weapon-carrying capacity, and stealth for the ninja. Which suit options (pp. 16-17) to add first depends on the focus. Especially stealthy ninja should include Dark or Quiet. Those with lots of weapons need Weapon Holder.

Every ninja can use a little DR. Ninja *can* use armor, but generally armor slows them down and adds unnecessary weight. Someone who needs DR should look into getting an armored ninja suit instead. Leave the damage-absorption to others; a ninja must stay mobile and rely on his stealth, abilities, and active defenses to safeguard his body.

A bandoleer (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 25) is *de rigueur* for ninja, and thrown-weapon specialists should get at least two. Load it up with nageteppe (both flash and smoke, *Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 25), shuriken (spike and star; see p. 13), packs of caltrops (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 25), and knives. A potion belt (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 25) is useful for grenades, but they can be clumsy and breakable in quantities. Look into a metsubushi (p. 13) and powders (see *Ninja Chemicals*, p. 16) for another way to use chemical warfare against foes.

Ninja are living examples of the adage that the best defense is a good offense. They carry *at least* one of each weapon that they can use; those who have learned *Killing Strike* (p. 5) acquire an assortment so they can use that ability repeatedly.

Get some poison (p. 16) for dealing with particularly tough foes. Monster drool (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 29) is cheap; put doses of it on everything possible.

Wealthy ninja should obtain a Dwarven whetstone (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 25) and use it on all of their edged weapons. This bonus stacks with those from Weapon Master and Killing Strike; add in some monster drool or bladeblack (*Dungeon Fantasy 1*, p. 28) for maximum one-shot effectiveness. A fully primed weapon such as this can be expensive, but it makes an excellent “last-ditch” weapon for those particularly tough foes.

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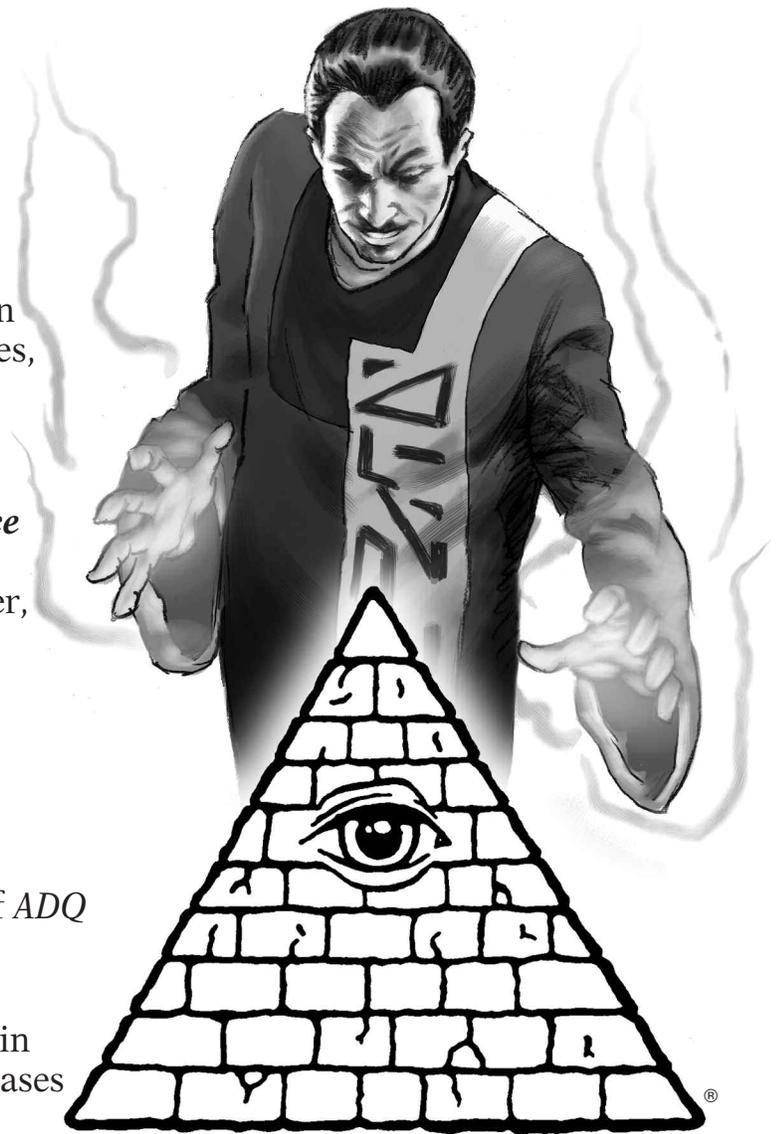
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