

GURPS[®]

Fourth Edition

LOADOUTS:[™] LOW-TECH ARMOR[™]



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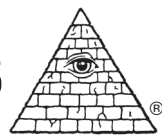
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About GURPS

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

The sun doth gild our armour; up, my lords!

– William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

INTRODUCTION

GURPS Low-Tech departs from the **GURPS Basic Set** in the way it handles armor. In particular, it has more-detailed rules for assembling a suit of armor from separate pieces. This assembly can involve pieces of armor of different types, which is historically accurate but involves an additional level of detail. **Low-Tech** only lists armor that covers the torso. For armor that covers other parts of the body, you need to use the *Armor Locations Table* (**Low-Tech**, p. 100). This can take time to calculate; time that you may not have. Alternatively, you can use **GURPS Low-Tech: Instant Armor**, but if you want realism, you must first research the type of historical armor that you want your character to wear.

GURPS Loadouts: Low-Tech Armor has done the research for you. This supplement examines the armor worn by various historical cultures and uses the rules in **Low-Tech** to model them in a simple format. These loadouts describe what a typical warrior of a specific culture would have worn during the time in question. Most of the time, they refer to the elite of a society, since these were often the only ones who made extensive use of body armor, but there are exceptions (such as the *Imperial Roman Legionary*, p. 20).

The loadouts here include clothing, armor, and shields. Just add the other items your warrior may need for battle – such as weapons, belts, traveling gear, maintenance tools, and so on – for a complete array of equipment. Similarly, the horse loadouts cover all of the defensive needs, though not miscellany such as blankets, saddles, saddlebags, and bridles. If it protects you in battle, **Low-Tech Armor** has it calculated and ready ahead of time – just choose, don, and fight!

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This supplement requires the **GURPS Basic Set** to use. It references *several* of the rules in **GURPS Low-Tech**, though each loadout includes enough information to use it on its own. As well, the new rules for hit locations refer to **GURPS Martial Arts**.

ADDITIONAL RULES

GURPS Low-Tech classifies armor in a handful of generic categories. Occasionally those categories don't take into account the subtle differences and unique features of some kinds of armor. The loadouts in this book show how the rules and mechanics presented in **Low-Tech** can be used to accurately model specific armor from a particular culture. Some of these loadouts make use of the following additional rules to add a finer level of detail.

Clothing

All loadouts include ordinary clothing (**Low-Tech**, p. 98), which comprises a loincloth and some variation of tunic (torso only), shirt (torso and arms), or shirt and pants (torso, arms, and legs). Assume a base 15 seconds don time for normal clothing, modified by the *Armor Locations Table* (**Low-Tech**,

p. 100). For example, a short-sleeved tunic has Don 15 (torso), but a long-sleeved shirt (torso *and* arms) has Don 23, while long pants (legs) have Don 15. A full outfit of a long-sleeved shirt and long pants has Don 38.

Many of these loadouts assume that the fighter has a “knightly” social status and so the price of his clothing is calculated using the cost of living of someone with at least Status 2. A short-sleeved tunic costs 40% of this; a long-sleeved one, 60%; and long pants, 40%. Weight uses the same percentages. The loincloth is subsumed into the other clothing and not listed separately. Footwear is normally included in the cost of ordinary clothing but these loadouts assume that more specialized military footwear is required, so this is calculated and listed separately.

Example: A Status 2 fighter has a cost of living of \$3,000 (p. B265). According to **Low-Tech** (p. 98), ordinary clothing (assumed to be a long-sleeved shirt and long pants) costs 20% of cost of living, or \$600, and weighs 4 lbs. It takes 38 seconds to don. When purchased separately, a tunic that covers only the torso (40%) is \$240, 1.6 lbs., Don 15; a long-sleeved shirt (60%) is \$360, 2.4 lbs., Don 23; and long pants (40%) are \$240, 1.6 lbs., Don 15.

Reading the Loadouts

See *Armor Tables* (p. B282) for an explanation of the notation and abbreviations used here. In brief:

Common Name: The description of the piece, in modern English.

Ethnic Name: The proper name of the armor, in its language of origin.

Location: The part of the body that the item covers; see *Armor Locations Table* (**Low-Tech**, p. 100).

DR: The amount of Damage Resistance it gives. The DR of some armor, such as mail, varies depending on damage type (see the notes after the table). “*” means that the armor is flexible and susceptible to blunt trauma (p. B379).

Cost: The item's price, in **GURPS** \$.

Weight: The item's weight, in pounds (rounded to the nearest tenth).

Don: The time required, in seconds, to put on this piece of armor; see *Donning Armor* (**Low-Tech**, p. 102).

Notes: Many items have special features or restrictions; see the notes after the table.

Face Hit Location

Helmets can have different attachments covering various parts of the face (see *Face Protection*, **Low-Tech**, p. 112). If the face is hit from the front, then roll 1d and consult the following table to see which part of the face is hit. These sub-locations can also be targeted deliberately at the indicated penalties.

PARTHIAN CATAPHRACTUS

All parts of their bodies were covered with thick scales, so fitted that the stiff-joints conformed with those of their limbs; . . . arrows that fell upon them could lodge only where they could see a little through tiny openings opposite the pupil of the eye, or where through the tip of their nose they were able to get a little breath.

– Ammianus Marcellinus

While heavy cavalry had been used by other cultures, such as the Thesalians and the Macedonians, the Parthians were the first to fully outfit the horse and rider in heavy armor. The Latin *cataphractus* comes from the Greek *kataphraktos*, which means “fully enclosed.” It was very expensive to maintain a force of cataphracts and this task was usually performed by the landowning elite who had the resources to provide armor and horses, and the time to train. Horses had to be strong with good endurance, and the Parthians commandeered the Nisean horse-breeding program of the Medians to supply suitable mounts.

Armor for both rider and horse was iron or bronze scale (*zânopûsh*), though sometimes mail (*zrâdha*) was worn. The rider wore a knee-length scale corselet that was split front and back to enable mounting a horse. It had long sleeves of light scale reaching to the wrist. Clothing was a sleeved, woolen *kaftan* that covered the thighs, and woolen trousers.

The head and face were covered by a close-fitting helmet that left only the eyes exposed. A light scale aventail (*mighfar*) hung from the bottom of the helmet to protect the throat and neck.

The Parthians also made extensive use of more lightly armored horse archers, who were renowned for being able to shoot their bow behind them while retreating (the “Parthian shot”). See *Scythian Horse Archer Loadout* (p. 11) for details.

Shields

Shields (*seppar*) were fairly small, circular, and made of hide. They were strapped to the forearm to free up the left hand so it could help steady the two-handed lance (*kontos*), which was held in a couched position.

Seppar: DB 1, \$40, 6 lbs., DR 4, HP 15, Cover DR 7.

Sasanid Persians

The Sasanids, successors to the Parthians, were the last pre-Islamic rulers of the Persian Empire (224-651 A.D.). During this period, they were the main rival to the Roman and early Byzantine Empires. The Sasanid knightly caste was called *Azadan* (“freemen”), and they formed the backbone of the Sasanid military, which extensively utilized cavalry – both heavy and light. The Romans used the terms *cataphractus* and *clibanarius* to refer to Sasanid heavy cavalry, and they were equipped very similarly to their Parthian predecessors and their Byzantine rivals – wielding both the lance and the bow, and wearing heavy scale or mail armor. Use the *Parthian Cataphractus Loadout* (below) or the *Byzantine Kataphraktos Loadout* (p. 22). The Sasanians also made extensive use of light cavalry – mainly horse archers and skirmishers (use *Mongol Light Cavalry Loadout*, p. 32).

Horses

Horse armor was constructed in sections, with panels of scales covering the animal’s head, neck, shoulders, waist, and flank. Each panel overlapped its neighbor; they were laced together and strapped to the horse. Use *Byzantine Heavy Horse Loadout* (p. 23).

Parthian Cataphractus Loadout (1st Century B.C. to 1st Century A.D.) (TL2)

Common Name	Ethnic Name	Location	DR	Cost	Weight	Don	Notes
Tunic	<i>Kaftan</i>	torso, arms, thighs	0	\$468	3.1	30	
Pants	–	legs	0	\$240	1.6	15	
Corselet	<i>Zânopûsh</i>	torso, thighs, knees	4	\$1,100	56	60	[1, 2, 3]
Armored Sleeves	–	arms	3	\$160	8	15	[1]
Gauntlets	–	hands	3	\$32	1.6	10	[1]
Boots	–	feet, shins	0*	\$108	2	10	[4]
Helmet	–	head, face	5	\$465	4.4	14	[5]
Aventail	–	neck	3	\$16	0.8	–	[1, 6]
TOTAL	–	–	–	\$2,589	77.5	154	

They placed great confidence in their armor, which was very strong and secure.

– Emperor Aurelian

Notes

- [1] -1 DR vs. *crushing*.
- [2] -1 to DX for actions involving the legs (see *Leg Armor and DX*, p. 4).
- [3] Inside thigh is exposed when on foot (see *Armor Gap – Inside Thigh*, p. 4).
- [4] +1 DR vs. *cutting*.
- [5] Protects the face on a roll of 2-6 on 1d.
- [6] Protects the face on a roll of 1 on 1d.

14th- to 15th-Century Japanese Samurai Loadout (TL2)

Select a type of face armor (p. 33) and add it to the loadout.

Common Name	Ethnic Name	Location	DR	Cost	Weight	Don	Notes
Tunic	<i>Kimono</i>	torso, arms, thighs	0	\$234	1.6	30	
Shirt	<i>Kataginu</i>	torso, arms	0	\$360	2.4	23	
Pants	<i>Hakama</i>	legs	0	\$240	1.6	15	
Corselet	<i>Dô</i>	chest	4	\$413	21	23	[1]
Fauld	<i>Kusazuri</i>	abdomen (front)	4	\$69	3.5	4	[1]
Pauldrons	<i>Sode</i>	shoulders	4	\$55	2.8	6	[1, 2]
Vambraces	<i>Kote</i>	forearms	3	\$110	6.3	10	[3, 4]
Greaves	<i>Suneate</i>	knees, shins	3	\$230	13.1	20	[3, 5]
Gauntlets	<i>Tekkô</i>	hands	3	\$100	0.8	10	
Sandals	<i>Waraji</i>	feet (bottom)	1	\$25	0.5	10	
Helmet	<i>Hachi</i>	skull, eyes	7	\$595	5.8	12	[6]
Aventail	<i>Shikoro</i>	neck (back)	4	\$17	0.8	3	[1]
Gorget	<i>Nodawa</i>	neck (front)	4	\$11	0.6	3	[1]
Arrow Curtain	<i>Horô</i>	chest (back)	0	\$80	2	3	[7]
TOTAL	-	-	-	\$2,539	62.8	172	

Notes

[1] -1 DR vs. *crushing*.

[2] Protects the arms on a roll of 6 on 1d.

[3] +1 DR vs. *cutting*.

[4] Protects the arms on a roll of 1-3 on 1d.

[5] Protects the legs on a roll of 1-4 on 1d.

[6] Protects the face on a roll of 6 on 1d.

[7] +1 DR vs. light missiles when traveling at Move 2 or more (see *Arrow Curtains*, **Low-Tech**, 104).

Japanese Mounted Archery

If they would test their armor, they should test only the front. Furthermore, while ornamentation on armor is unnecessary, one should be very careful about the appearance of his helmet. It is something that accompanies his head to the enemy's camp.

— Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure*

Samurai practiced horse archery on the battlefield from the Heian to the Sengoku periods (ninth to 17th centuries), but it declined in importance from the end of the 13th century onward. Initially, combat involved lines of mounted samurai shooting arrows while charging at the enemy, only to wheel away at the last moment to reform for another charge. However, by the end of the 11th century mounted combat had devolved into the ritualistic formality of a duel. Instead of disciplined archers charging and shooting in formation, a samurai now rode into the fray shouting out challenges, declaring his military prowess and family lineage, before attacking whichever enemy combatant he had singled out. Tactical deployment was futile because commanders could no longer control hot-blooded warriors intent on winning glory and honor. Battle was little more than a confused melee of horsemen. Foot soldiers played little part in samurai warfare at this time. A samurai's retainers were tasked with carrying their lord's equipment and assisting him if he were unhorsed. Because there was no pitched infantry battle, casualties tended to be fairly light.

The above form of battle is well-suited to roleplaying. The PCs can play individual fighters and use mechanics

for one-on-one combat rather than being stuck in a formation with lots of other fighters. They can be less concerned with the outcome of a battle and concentrate on winning individual duels with enemy opponents. Each victory (especially over famous opponents) will increase his reputation and his family's. The Horse Archery technique is described on p. B231 and the mounted combat rules are on pp. B396-398, but the more-detailed Mounted Shooting Technique (*Martial Arts*, p. 77) and the Kyujutsu style (*Martial Arts*, pp. 179-180) would also be appropriate for samurai archers. Riding rolls are at -3 for riding with no hands unless you have the Hands-Free Riding technique (*Martial Arts*, p. 73).

The Japanese bow (*yumi*) was a laminated composite of wood and bamboo. It differed from other bows in that it was asymmetrical, with two-thirds of its two-meter length *above* the handgrip (see *Martial Arts*, p. 215). Some archers trained by shooting at live dogs (*inuomono*), but the practice was discouraged by Buddhist priests.

The horse archery tradition predominated until the Mongol invasions in 1274 and 1281 (see *Mongol Cavalry*, pp. 31-32). Mongol fighters had no interest in Japanese ritualistic duels and samurai suffered the ignominy of having their mounts shot from under them. Samurai equipment and tactics proved to be ill-suited for fighting on foot. Luckily, the Mongol invasions failed and the samurai had the opportunity to revise their tactics. From this time onward, samurai tactics started to shift away from mounted archery to focus on fighting with swords and polearms, placing more emphasis on infantry combat.

16TH-CENTURY ITALIAN CONDOTTIERE

A fighter who has his head covered with steel, his breast protected by a cuirass and by a shield, his legs and arms armored, is much more fit to protect himself from the pikes and to get within them than lightly armored infantry.

– Niccolò Machiavelli

During the time of Machiavelli (15th and 16th centuries), Italy was in turmoil. Popes engaged in warfare, and the various city-states vied for status and lucrative markets while trying to ward against invasion by foreign powers. Governments were generally short-lived, and political alliances constantly changed. Italian mercenary captains, known as *condottieri*, thrived in this environment. A *condotta* was a contract between a mercenary company and a city-state. This document was signed by the company's commander, the *condottiere*. It was no coincidence that Milan was one of the most advanced armor-producing centers in the world. The constant state of warfare in Italy over a prolonged period led to many innovations in armor design. Wealthy and influential commanders were constantly looking for any advantage and were willing to pay for it.

The greater prevalence of firearms and heavy bows led to armor being made of heavier plate than previously, much of it hardened steel. Heavy cavalry continued to be covered head to foot in steel, and the loadout below reflects this type of armor. Most of the pieces in the loadout are the same as the earlier German harness (but using Italian terms) and so won't be repeated here.

The helmet continued to evolve, though. The *armet* (*galea, celata*) was equipped with a turn around the edge of the neck that engaged with the gorget (*goletta*), which was articulated to enhance flexibility. This turn enabled the wearer to move his head without leaving a vulnerable gap at the neck; in effect, this means that an attack to the neck can no longer bypass DR, since there are no gaps to exploit (see *Harsh Realism – Armor Gaps, Low-Tech*, p. 101).

Infantry had less coverage. Plate harness (*arnesi*) covered the torso – breast (*petto*), back (*schiena*), and abdomen (*falda* or *panziera*) – and arms, but left the legs unprotected. “Half plate” reached to the thighs while “three-quarter plate” reached

to the knees. This was the trade off for having heavier plate to help resist firearms.

For more information on this period, see *GURPS Hot Spots: Renaissance Florence*.

Padded Jacks

Layered cloth is a surprisingly effective means of protection. The Ordinances of Louis XI of France (1461-1483) state how these jacks should be constructed.

And first they must have for the said jacks, thirty, or at least twenty-five, folds of cloth, and a stag's skin; those of thirty, with the stag's skin being the best cloth that has been worn and rendered flexible, is the best for this purpose, and these jacks should be made in four quarters. The sleeves should be as strong as the body, with the exception of the leather, and the arm-hole of the sleeve must be large, which arm-hole should be placed near the collar not on the bone of the shoulder, that it may be broad under the arm-pit and full under the arm sufficiently ample and large on the sides below. The collar should be like the rest of the jack, but not be too high behind, to allow room for the sallet. This jack should be laced in front, and under the opening must be a hanging piece (porte piece) of the same strength as the jack itself. Thus the jack will be secure and easy, provided there be a pourpoint without sleeves or collar of two folds of cloth, that shall be only four fingers broad on the shoulder; to which pourpoint shall be attached the hose. Thus shall the wearer float, as it were, within his jack, and be at his ease; for never have been seen half-a-dozen men killed by stabs or arrow wounds in such jacks, particularly if they be troops accustomed to fighting.

Treat the padded jack as heavy layered cloth on the torso (DR 4) and medium layered cloth on the arms (DR 3): \$775, 38 lbs., Don 45.

Horses

Plate barding is essentially the same as in the previous century. Italian terms are *testera* (head), *pechera* (chest), *cuello* (neck), *grupera* (rump), *flanqueras* (flanks), *guardamalaso* (tail). Use the *15th-Century Heavy Horse Loadout* (p. 40).

Knights who are at the wars eat their bread in sorrow . . . they give up their bodies to the adventure of life in death. Moldy bread or biscuit, meat cooked or uncooked; today enough to eat and tomorrow nothing, little or no wine, water from a pond or butt, bad quarters, the shelter of a tent or branches, a bad bed, poor sleep with their armor still on their backs, burdened with iron, the enemy an arrow-shot off.

– Gutierre Diaz De Gamez, *The Unconquered Knight*

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They, astounded at the flash of the armor, and the swiftness of the charge, and attacked by showers of arrows and missiles, half naked as they were, never stopped to resist but gave way.

– Arrian

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