

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

MARTIAL ARTS

TECHNICAL GRAPPLING™

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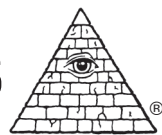
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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

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.

INTRODUCTION

Grappling skills in *GURPS Fourth Edition* provide a complementary unarmed alternative to the timeless classic of beating the snot out of someone via kicking and punching. Grabbing, throwing, bending, and breaking people has a long and storied history, readily combined with weapon fighting.

GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling replaces or expands the options presented in *Unarmed Combat* (pp. B370-372) for grappling. It offers the skilled grappler new tactics in the same fashion that *GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles* “upgrades” mages or *GURPS Tactical Shooting* treats trained gunmen.

Grappling in the *GURPS Basic Set* is designed to produce results on the same gratifying time scale as a blow with a weapon or fist. As soon as you grapple your opponent, you receive decisive combat bonuses. Achieving a pin brings on 10 seconds of heavily penalized hell for your foe.

With *Technical Grappling*, this becomes a struggle where the degree of restraint is *variable*. You will still be able to achieve dominating positions, mighty take-downs, and crippling locks and throws. But grappling is hard, sweaty, and painful . . . you’re going to have to work at it.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

GURPS Martial Arts: Technical Grappling requires both the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Martial Arts* to use. Nearly all of the information herein has been adapted and expanded from the unarmed combat rules in those books.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Douglas H. Cole has been roleplaying since 1981, and playing *GURPS* since 1988. He has been an active playtester for both Third Edition and Fourth Edition, and acted as lead playtester for *GURPS High Tech* and *GURPS Tactical Shooting*. Douglas trained in *Hwa Rang Do* from 2002-2011, until sidelined by injury.

He enjoys watching movies, target shooting, and postponing woodworking and home improvement projects. Douglas has earned two doctorates: A real one, in materials science and engineering, from Northwestern University, and a cool one, in *GURPS Ballistics*, from Illuminati Online University. He is an R&D manager for a major hard-disc-drive company.

Glossary

Technical Grappling introduces new concepts and terms that are central to the rules.

active control (p. 5): *Control Points* maintained on a location, and the penalties which naturally result. As long as you are grappling your foe and he does not attack to break free, active control is maintained from turn to turn.

Control Points (pp. 5-6): A quantity – akin to damage or an affliction – representing how firmly you have seized a person or object, and the extent to which you are able to restrict your target’s actions. Control Points (CP) impart penalties to ST and DX, and may also be *spent* in Contests to lower your foe’s chance of winning.

Grip CP (p. 12): The *Control Points* which must be overcome to take a weapon or object away from you.

Grip ST (pp. 6-7): The effective combined ST of a body part or group of parts (e.g., one arm, two arms and a leg, or five tentacles and a toothy maw). The Grip ST of a mouth is also called Bite ST.

referred control (pp. 5-6): *Control Points* which affect the body parts that aren’t currently grappled, representing the target’s inability to move freely. For example, grappling an arm gives you *active control* over that arm and *referred control* over every other part of the subject’s body.

Trained (Attribute) (p. 4): The specified attribute modified by any *training bonus*. The most common is Trained ST (ST plus training bonus).

training bonus (p. 4): A bonus, usually applied to ST or *Grip ST*, based on the relative level of your grappling skill.

Of the single rapier fight between valiant men, having both skill, he that is the best wrestler, or if neither of them can wrestle, the strongest man most commonly kills the other, or leaves him at his mercy.

– George Silver, *Paradoxes of Defence*

CONTROL POINTS

When using *Technical Grappling*, there are various degrees of “grappled.” A successful grappling attack inflicts *Control Points* (CP) that hinder your foe’s actions. Control Points are analogous to damage or an affliction (rather than a character’s store of Hit Points or Fatigue Points). They represent the persistent effects of a grapple and the leverage and position required to cause injury. Determine how many CP you apply by looking up your Trained ST on the *Damage Table* (pp. B16 or 48), using the “Thrust” column.

A successful grappling attack or Grabbing Parry (p. 42) achieves a *grip* on your opponent, even if you roll 0 CP. Techniques that are resolved with a Contest of skill can never obtain a grip on your opponent or increase CP. Slams (p. B371) and shoves (p. B372) do not use the Control Point mechanic.

Grappling is *mutual*. If an enemy grabs you, you may exploit that grab to execute grappling techniques. You will still suffer penalties for CP inflicted by *his* grapple, and you must fulfill any requirements of your chosen technique.

Active Control

Once achieved, Control Points may be maintained until you let go, expend them, or your foe breaks free. While you maintain them, your opponent is less able to resist effectively. These CP and the penalties they inflict are called *active control*. Active control *replaces* the usual -4 to DX from a successful grappling attack (p. B370).

Active control reduces the coordination and power that a grappled subject can bring to bear, lowering his ST and DX while the CP are maintained. Every full 2 CP inflicted give -1 to ST and DX for actions involving that body part. (See *Bigger and Stronger!*, p. 9, for scaling options for strong creatures.) You do not have to spend CP (see below) to inflict these penalties; it is an automatic, free consequence of your grapple. Active control hinders *all* uses of ST and DX involving the body part in question, including skill use, parries, Contests, damage, and Control Point rolls. If an action would involve multiple body parts, use the worst penalty among them.

Spending CP

A fighter who has accumulated CP on an opponent may *spend* them:

- Control Points *may* be spent to reduce your foe’s ability to win a *grappling-related* Contest (pp. B348-349) – including Feints (see p. 21). Spending CP can *reduce* a HT-based or Trained HT roll, but *never* to below the HT score itself. Your opponent is at -1 for every 1 CP spent.
- Control Points *must* be spent when attempting to inflict damage or pain using grappling skills and techniques; see below.
- You may spend your own CP when making an attack to break free (p. 35) of a grapple. If your attack is successful, add the CP spent to your Break Free CP roll.
- You may spend CP to reduce a striking hit location penalty (at 1 CP per -1 removed). The modifier can be improved up to the grappling penalty, but not more than that; e.g., when punching the skull, you could spend up to 4 CP to improve the hit location penalty from -7 to -3. If your foe has CP as well, he may spend them to *cancel out* this effect, but not to make it more difficult.

Spending CP increases their effect for one turn, representing directed motion that hinders your opponent’s

response on offense or defense – or for breaking free, leveraging your own control to escape that of your foe. Point expenditure must be declared *before* the dice are rolled – though the spent CP are not lost until after the roll.

Example: You have amassed 10 CP (-5 to your foe’s ST and DX), and decide to spend 4 CP to further lower his roll in the Quick Contest for a takedown. He will roll at -9 (-5 from active control and -4 from spent CP). Successful or not, you lose the 4 CP after your takedown attempt. You retain 6 CP, keeping him at -3 to ST and DX.

Control Points are also spent to set the upper limit on pain or injury that can be inflicted with a technique. For most attacks, damage is limited to the *lesser* of CP spent or the margin of victory in the Contest to determine success – but the CP are gone, even on a failed roll. Locks are more effective; the maximum damage or pain from a lock is *double* the CP spent!

If you roll a critical success, any CP spent count double! Your foe gets no active defenses vs. an attack, and may not roll to defend himself in any Contest to resist a grappling technique. However, he may *always* roll vs. HT, vs. ST to resist pain or injury, or vs. ST-4 when ST is a proxy for mass (p. 20).

Ready to Rumble

Technical Grappling provides enhanced detail for grappling and ground fighting. Here are two cinematic options geared toward faster and more exciting play.

Cranking It Up

Looking up CP based on thrust can result in small changes in control from turn to turn. For more rapid and decisive play, double CP inflicted from any source! This will make a good grappler nearly irresistible, able to inflict dominating restraint and crippling injury in a matter of seconds.

Quick and Dirty CP

For speed and simplicity, apply CP equal to (Trained ST)/2 to your foe after a successful grappling attack. This is fast and cinematic, representing a near-maximum CP roll on every attack.

Referred Control and Whole-Body Actions

Though Control Points are applied to specific hit locations, restricting one body part impacts all others – a concept termed *referred control*. This is still rated in CP, but these “referred CP” cannot be spent.

- If a location is *not* actively grappled, apply penalties as if half of the *total* active CP (round down) had been applied.
- If a location *is* actively grappled, and if the referred CP calculated above exceed CP from active control, apply penalties for referred CP *instead*.
- All locations grappled for *more than* 1/4 of total active CP reinforce one another. Eligible locations receive “bonus” CP equal to 1/4 of the sum (round up) of *active* CP maintained on *such locations only*.

CHAPTER TWO

ARMED

GRAPPLING

The noise of the battle drew closer . . . too close. Sterick the Red, Baron of Felltower, heaved his bulk off of a rickety stool, strapped on his shield, picked up his axe, and lumbered out of his tent.

Yes, there they were, playing games behind the lines. One saw Sterick, and left his companions to engage what looked to be a large, soft target.

The man approached, spear at the ready; Sterick read his inexperience and waited. A tentative thrust . . . more than enough. Sterick trapped the spear haft under his arm. Pivoting, Sterick applied his massive bulk to his foe's spear, flinging him to the ground. The mercenary desperately raised his shield.

Sterick reached out with his axe, hooking the fallen man's shield out of line. Circling the weapon overhead and spinning it in his hand, he brought the backspike down hard, punching through metal and bone.

Grappling and weapons go together like peanut butter and jelly: They work well on their own, but together they're even better. Melee Weapon skills include training in grappling applications.

An armed grapple uses an attack roll, and CP are inflicted upon a successful attack. Some weapons enable grappling actions and techniques to be performed through them; others only inflict penalties for active control.

*The moment you go
into a match worried about
your opponent, you are
at a disadvantage and
are better off going home.*

– Jean Jacques Machado

GRABBING WEAPONS, SHIELDS, AND OBJECTS

You may grab your opponent's weapon or shield – or anything else – using grappling skills. Out of combat, resolve this

with a Ready maneuver; see *Lifting and Moving Things* (p. B353). Where there is disagreement as to who is the proper owner, however, Control Points can make things more interesting. Grabbing a weapon or shield can make it unusable. The Disarming technique (p. 36) is used to take things away, while Retain Weapon (pp. 39-40) helps you hang on to stuff.

Seizing a Weapon or Object

Control Points applied to a weapon affect the weapon and the limbs grasping it. A weapon grabbed in two hands is treated as part of *both* hands; a shield strapped to an arm is integral to the arm.

Grip CP

A weapon's wielder automatically has *Grip CP* to resist it being taken away. Grip CP is equal to 0.5×ST for one-handed weapons or 1×ST for two-handed ones (or one-handed weapons supported with both hands, like a braced pistol), plus a training bonus based on Retain Weapon (pp. 39-40). Retain Weapon uses the average training-bonus progression (p. 48) *regardless* of weapon. (Remember that Retain Weapon defaults to weapon skill, or to DX for ranged weapons.)

The minimum Grip CP needed to keep a weapon *ready* is half of the weapon's ST stat (round *down*) if it's one-handed, or its full ST stat if two-handed. Wielding a weapon when you are barely strong enough to do so risks a fast disarm. If CP fall below this minimum, the weapon is *unready* but still grasped. If Grip CP fall below 0, the weapon has been taken away!

If unopposed, you may reestablish full Grip CP with a Ready maneuver. If someone has grappled your weapon, you must "attack" it to boost your Grip CP (see *Retain Weapon*, pp. 39-40). Gripping a one-handed weapon with both hands while that weapon is grappled by a foe requires an attack – but, if successful, increases Grip CP based on *both* hands' Grip ST if successful.

Example: A bastard sword (pp. B271 and B274) requires ST 11 to use one-handed or ST 10 to use two-handed. The Grip CP threshold before the weapon becomes unready is thus 5 CP for one-handed use, and 10 CP for two-handed. A ST 12 warrior with both Broadsword and Two-Handed Sword at DX+4 (+2 training bonus from Retain Weapon) would have Trained ST 8 one-handed, and Trained ST 14 with two hands.

If you succeed in taking a weapon or object away from a foe (see *Gimme That!*, p. 13), you will need to take a Ready maneuver before you can wield it.

If you have already grappled your foe's arm, you may resolve Handcuffing as a Quick Contest, spending CP as desired. If you have not grappled the arm, you must *attack* using a hand containing a ready pair of handcuffs, and the roll is at -4.

Head Lock

see *Martial Arts*, p. 74

See *Joint Locks* (below).

Hook

see *Martial Arts*, p. 74

Default: prerequisite skill-5.

Prerequisite: Melee Weapon skill; cannot exceed prerequisite skill.

An appropriately constructed weapon can be used to grapple a foe at its full Reach. A successful attack inflicts CP. You may transition to any grappling technique that defaults to ST. See *Hooking* (p. 15) for more details.

Joint Locks

Variable

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Judo, Wrestling, or appropriate Melee Weapon skill; cannot exceed prerequisite skill+4.

These techniques replace Arm or Wrist Lock, Head Lock, and Leg Lock.

Any attempt to force a foe's joints to the limits of their physiology to impair function or cause pain and injury is referred to as a joint lock. While there are many types of locks, each follows similar rules.

To apply a lock, you must *first* grapple the location containing the targeted joint (you *can* use Grabbing Parry or Armed Grapple). For your next attack, roll against your lock technique

– at no hit location penalty, because you have already grappled the targeted location!

Your foe may parry or dodge; a Breakfall (p. 35) parry is an option. If the attack gets past his defense, roll CP; the joint is considered *locked*. Your foe may not use a location containing a locked joint for *any* purpose except to break free. This grapple/lock sequence is a prime candidate for a Combination (p. 22).

Once the lock has been achieved, inflicting pain or injury is a free action on your *next* turn (but see *Locks, Throws, Damage, and Multiple Attacks*, p. 25, for optional rules). You must spend CP to set the upper bound in injury, but Control Points spent on a locked joint count *double* for this purpose. After spending CP, roll a Quick Contest of your Trained ST vs. the better of the defender's Trained ST or Trained HT. (In both cases, use the training bonus based on the lock technique being used.) When inflicting injury, apply the lesser of the margin of victory or *twice* the CP spent as crushing damage. You may also apply pain (see *Inflicting More Pain With Locks*, below) or throw your foe using *Throws from Locks* (p. 25).

To unlock a joint, your opponent must successfully Break Free (p. 35). If his attack to break free succeeds and you fail your own active defense, the joint is unlocked regardless of whether there are CP remaining.

Arm or Hand Lock

Average

Arm or Hand Lock represents a body of techniques usually taught together; it would be rare to learn arm locks without also learning hand locks. Arm locks manipulate the large joints of the elbow and shoulder; hand locks include the fingers, hand, and wrist. It takes injury over HP/3 to cripple the hand, or HP/2 for the arm.

Head Lock

Hard

Also known as a *neck crank*, Head Lock attempts to cause pain or injury directly to the vertebrae in the neck.

Inflicting More Pain With Locks

You may inflict pain instead of injury with locks. Roll a Quick Contest of your Trained ST or lock technique vs. your foe's Trained ST or Trained HT (all training bonuses are based on the lock technique). The defender may substitute Breakfall (p. 35) to try to flip-fall out of it. A defender with Low Pain Threshold is -4 to HT in the Quick Contest, while High Pain Threshold gives +3 to HT.

Margin of victory is used to calculate the level of affliction (p. B428) suffered: mild pain at 1 point, moderate pain at 2-3 points, severe pain at 4-5 points, terrible pain at 6-9 points, or agony at 10+ points. You may reroll each turn; your opponent may attempt to break free as usual. *Mild* pain triggers a roll to avoid tapping out (below), but imposes no other penalties. Following a lock, your margin of victory is capped at *double* your CP expenditure (p. 5) – this is the key benefit to causing pain with locks! There is no reason to spend more than 5 CP to set the

maximum pain level: 10 points for agony allows the most severe result.

Tapping Out

In submission-based competitions, the goal is to force your opponent to give up, or “tap out,” to avoid injury from well-applied locks and holds. To determine if your foe feels the urge to “tap,” make a HT or Will roll at the beginning of each turn he suffers from *any* level of pain, suffocation, or strangulation, applying any pain penalties (e.g. -4 for severe pain) or -10 for Agony. This roll is akin to a Fright Check. If he fails the roll, he *feels the urge* to give up – whether he *actually* taps out is up to the player or GM! He will drop an object being gripped (such as a weapon), and be more compliant: *Double* any pain-induced penalties for resisting posture changes, position changes, or disarms following a failed roll to tap out.

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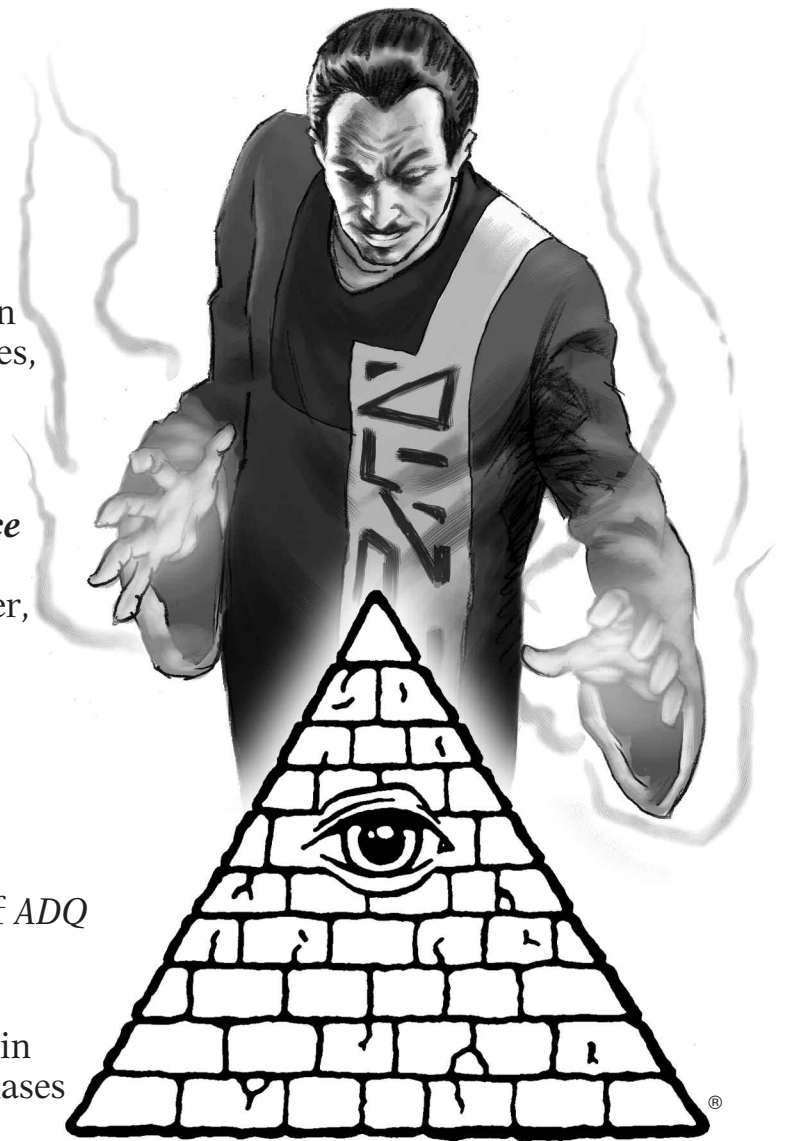
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